

Koreas agree to April talks

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — In a stunning reversal, North Korea expressed a willingness to hold talks with the United States and to suspend nuclear and missile tests in the meantime, a South Korean official said Wednesday after a landmark meeting in Pyongyang.

President Donald Trump was cautiously optimistic about what he called "possible progress being made in talks with North Korea."

"For the first time in many years, a serious effort is being made by all parties concerned," he



KOREAN CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY,
KOREA NEWS SERVICE/AP

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, right, meets South Korean National Security Director Chung Eui-yong in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Monday.

tweeted. "The World is watching and waiting! May be false hope, but the U.S. is ready to go hard in either direction!"

SEE KOREAS ON PAGE 3

AFRICOM seeks danger pay for troops deployed to Niger

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Africa Command is seeking danger pay for troops deployed to Niger, a move that comes after an ambush that killed four soldiers and that will likely result in greater oversight of military operations in the region.

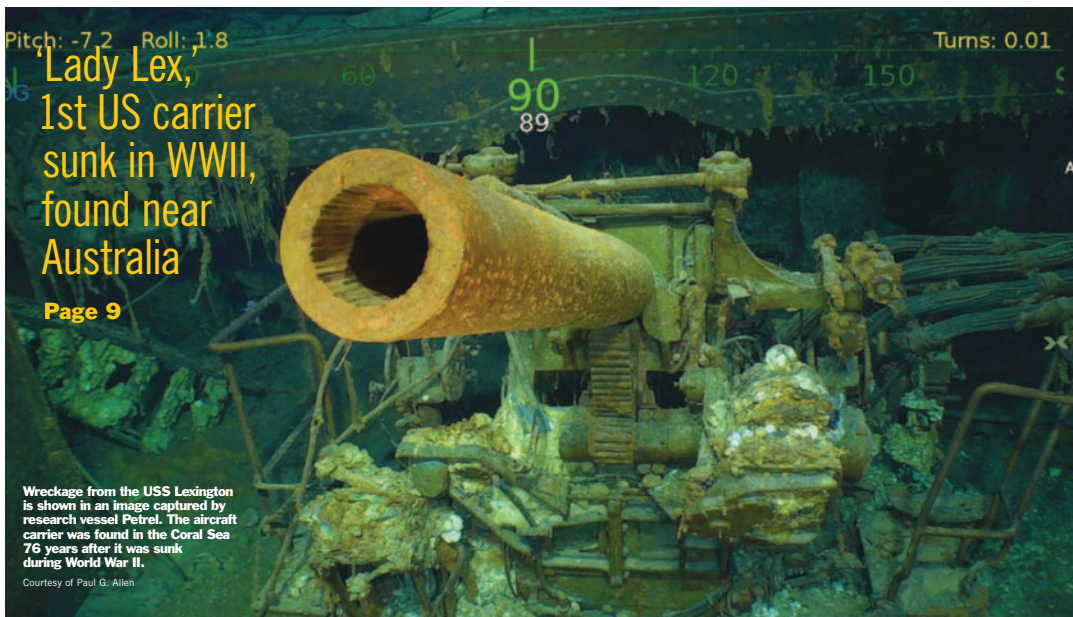
AFRICOM chief Gen. Thomas Waldhauser said during testimony before Congress on Tuesday that his command's investigation into the ambush has been completed and is in the hands of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis for review. Waldhauser de-

clined to elaborate on the report until Mattis has finalized it and family members of the fallen have been briefed on its findings.

However, when asked why some 800 troops deployed in Niger don't get danger pay even as others in less volatile places such as Kenya do, Waldhauser said an effort is underway to remedy the situation.

"We had already submitted a packet for Niger to qualify for imminent danger pay and understand it's at the national level now for final approval," he said.

SEE AFRICOM ON PAGE 5



Pitch: -7.2 Roll: 1.8
Turns: 0.01
60 90 120 150
90 89
A
X
"Lady Lex,"
1st US carrier
sunk in WWII,
found near
Australia

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Wreckage from the USS Lexington is shown in an image captured by research vessel Petrel. The aircraft carrier was found in the Coral Sea 76 years after it was sunk during World War II.

Courtesy of Paul G. Allen

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Teams can improve seeds, earn trips to NCAA tourney in conference tournaments

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Special story got Lucy Hale back to work on television

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MILITARY

Marines deploy F-35B fighters on USS Wasp in Pacific, hail 'up-gunned' air-sea capability

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PACIFIC

Sub could be next Navy vessel to visit Vietnam

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

A submarine might be the next Navy vessel to visit Vietnam if the 7th Fleet's commander gets his way.

Vice Adm. Phillip Sawyer, who once led the Guam-based Submarine Squadron 15, suggested the submarine port call during a teleconference with reporters about the USS Carl Vinson's historic visit to Danang this week.

The ship, accompanied by the guided-missile cruiser USS Lake Champlain, the destroyer USS Wayne E. Meyer and 5,500 sailors, is the first U.S. aircraft carrier to dock in the country since the Vietnam War ended in 1975.

"I'm a career submariner (and) I would greatly like to bring one of the U.S. submarines to call at a port in Vietnam," Sawyer said.

The Navy has four Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines — the USS Key West, USS Oklahoma City, USS Asheville and USS Topeka — forward-deployed to Guam.

The nuclear-powered subs are far more advanced than those operated by China, which has clashed with Vietnam and other neighboring countries over disputed territory in the South China Sea. Experts see the subs' survivability and firepower as a key deterrent to aggression in the region.

Asked if the Navy might conduct exercises or joint patrols with Vietnam, Sawyer said there would be discussions with the Vietnamese navy about how to build on the partnership.

"It really is kind of a two-way street," he said, adding that officials will talk about what might be of benefit to the Vietnamese navy and come up with plans for "naval engagement and naval activities."

Sawyer said the Carl Vinson's port call is part of a growing relationship that included a visit by the 7th Fleet flagship, the USS Blue Ridge, in 2009.

The Navy will work to normalize ties to its Vietnamese counterpart, he said.



Photos courtesy of the U.S. Navy

The aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson arrives in Danang, Vietnam, on Monday.

"I'm a career submariner (and) I would greatly like to bring one of the U.S. submarines to call at a port in Vietnam."

Vice Adm. Phillip Sawyer
7th Fleet commander

"I will work closely with my Vietnamese partners, and we will develop ideas and options for what makes sense for both of us," he said.

This year, Pacific Partnership, an annual exercise that deploys U.S. forces to engage with militaries and humanitarian groups in the region, will stop in Vietnam as it has in past years, he said.

A lack of transparency by China, which has been reclaiming land and building military facilities on disputed South China Sea



Leaders from Vietnam and the United States take part in a welcome ceremony.

territory, is creating "angst" in the region, Sawyer said.

Rear Adm. John Fuller, commander of the Carl Vinson strike group whose father

served in the Army in the Vietnam War, said he's proud to be back there getting a warm welcome from locals.

"I'm very proud of my father's service. ... Forty years ago, the relationship between the U.S. and Vietnam was not as good as it is now," he said, noting that ties have improved between America and other former adversaries such as Germany, Italy and Japan.

"The Carl Vinson strike group is so honored to be here," he said. "My crew, my sailors are all very happy to be here. ... We're also very happy that our visit enhances the bilateral relationship."

U.S. sailors are interacting with Vietnamese people and appreciate the country's vibrant culture, he said.

Sailors in Danang are getting liberty similar to what they receive during other port calls in the region. Lt. Cmdr. Tim Hawkins, a Carrier Strike Group One public affairs officer, said in an email.

"If not on duty, many are able to stay overnight in hotels ashore," he said. "Others are able to enjoy [Danang] in the daytime and evening before returning to the ship at a required time based on rank."

Sailors are enjoying tours and participating in community service events, professional exchanges and sports, Hawkins said.

"Many also are helping welcome more than 1,600 guests who are visiting USS Carl Vinson over the course of our time here," he said.

Mary Tarnowska, the U.S. consul general in Vietnam, called the carrier visit a milestone in bilateral relations. The U.S. has provided Vietnam's coast guard with a cutter, six patrol boats and a training and maintenance facility, with more gear on the way, she said.

The United States wants to see a strong, independent and prosperous Vietnam, she added.

robson.seth@stripes.com
Twitter: @SethRobson1

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MILITARY

N. Korea shows signs plutonium work restarted

By KIM GAMEL
AND YOO KYONG CHANG
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea has shown signs that it has resumed the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons, a U.S. think tank said, citing recent commercial satellite images.

Monday's report came as the communist state is engaged in rare diplomacy with South Korea that has reduced tensions amid fears of a new conflict on the divided peninsula.

In a remarkable first, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dined with South Korean President Moon Jae-in's envoys Monday in Pyongyang. It was the first time he has met with South Korean officials since taking over the ruling family dynasty after his father died of a heart attack in 2011.

Analysts said the North is likely sending a signal that it will continue its military programs in an effort to boost its leverage as the South presses it to hold talks with the United States.

38 North said the 5-megawatt reactor at the Yongbyon nuclear complex shows signs of operation, including steam vapor plumes from the generator hall and nearby river ice melt. The monitoring website also spotted a new military tent camp established last month on the complex, more personnel and two large open-bred trucks.

The website, which is run by the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hop-

kins University, examined commercial satellite images from Feb. 17 and Feb. 25.

38 North's analysts noted that no cooling water discharges have been observed as would be expected under normal operations but said that was likely because the North Koreans had hidden them by extending a discharge pipe into the river.

"If the reactor is operating again, as the evidence suggests, it means North Korea has resumed production of plutonium presumably for its nuclear weapons program," said the analysis by experts Frank Pabian, Joseph Bermudez Jr. and Jack Liu.

They said the apparent extension of the discharge pipe into the river would make monitoring efforts more difficult as visible indicators decrease over the summer.

The military camp is at the intersection of two roads leading to the radiochemical laboratory and the former fuel fabrication area, which includes the uranium enrichment plant, 38 North said.

"It is unclear what specific role this military camp will play, but it could be to support new construction and/or improve site security," it added.

North Korea may also be allowing more troops to be seen outside on purpose to play to the satellites and external observers, the website said, noting they could also be holding fire drills or other training and maintenance efforts.

The trucks, including one that had a blue tarplike material lining



38 North said the reactor at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex shows signs of operation, including steam vapor plumes from the generator hall and nearby river ice melt.

its bed, could be used to transport fresh nuclear fuel, carbon dioxide or other materials to and from the reactor.

South Korea's military declined to comment on the report during a press briefing Tuesday, saying only that it "has been closely monitoring the North Korean military's movement related to it in cooperation with the United States."

Tensions spiked last year as the North test-fired several missiles, including three ICBMs, and conducted its sixth and most powerful underground nuclear test. The new findings were a dose of bad news after weeks of diplomatic breakthroughs beginning with North Korea's agreement to join the Feb. 9-25 Olympics.

North Korean athletes and offi-

cials also were due to travel to the South this week to participate in the March 8-18 Paralympics.

President Donald Trump has said he's willing to consider talks with the North, but his administration also has vowed to maintain its campaign aimed at isolating the regime and depriving it of foreign currency that enables its weapons programs. The United States has slapped North Korea with new unilateral sanctions in addition to punishing measures imposed by the U.N. Security Council last year.

Moon, meanwhile, reiterated his call for dialogue with the North but stressed that the end goal must be the denuclearization of the peninsula. He also stressed the need to strengthen combined defense capabilities with South Korea's longtime

ally the United States.

"Peace is our survival and a necessary condition for our prosperity. However, without a strong military and robust national defense, we can neither make nor maintain peace," Moon said Monday during a graduation ceremony at the Korea Military Academy.

Chang Gwangil, a military technology professor at South Korea's Dongyang University, said the North appears to be employing a two-pronged effort of developing its military power internally even as it launches a peace offensive.

"In this dimension, we should be on our guard continuously and not destabilize our readiness posture," he said.

gamekim@stripes.com
chang.kyong@stripes.com

Koreas: Agreement on talks raises a 'glimmer of hope' despite skepticism

FROM FRONT PAGE

Vice President Mike Pence said the U.S. would remain "firm in our resolve" whichever direction talks with North Korea go. "All options are on the table and our posture toward the regime will not change until we see credible, verifiable and concrete steps toward denuclearization," Pence said in a statement.

The announcement raised hopes that a détente fostered by the recent Olympics in South Korea could blossom into broader talks over the growing threat from the North's nuclear weapons program.

It followed a recent ebb in tensions after months of threats and saber rattling by Washington and North Korea that prompted fears of a new conflict on the divided peninsula.

At a minimum, South Korea's national security director, Chung Eui-yong, said the North and South Korean leaders had agreed to meet in late April in a building on the South Korean side of the truce village of Panmunjom in the heavily

fortified border area.

The sides also will establish a hotline to allow South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to communicate before the planned meeting, Chung said.

It would be only the third summit between the Koreas, which remain technically at war after their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

Nung made his remarks to reporters after returning from a two-day trip to Pyongyang that included dinner and a toast from Kim Jong Un. The 10-member delegation comprised the first South Korean officials to meet the 34-year-old North Korean leader since he took power after his father's death of a heart attack in 2011.

Perhaps most surprising was Chung's claim that North Korea had expressed an openness to holding a "candid dialogue" with the United States over nuclear disarmament demands.

"The North side clearly affirmed

its commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and said it would have no reason to possess nuclear weapons if the safety of its regime is guaranteed and military threats removed," Chung said.

He added that North Korea had "made it clear that it won't resume strategic provocations like additional nuclear tests or test-launches of ballistic missiles," during talks with the United States.

Trump has largely taken a hard line against the North including threats to take military action to stop its progress toward developing a nuclear weapon that could target the U.S. mainland. But the president also has signaled a willingness to talk to Kim Jong Un while maintaining denuclearization was a condition for such dialogue.

"This agreement does represent a glimmer of hope. It does represent a pathway to negotiations," said Frank Aum, a North Korea expert at the U.S. Institute of Peace. But he said it's hard to tell whether

the recent breakthroughs are due to increased sanctions and diplomatic pressure against the North or part of Kim Jong Un's plan to solidify his hold on power.

Potential hurdles include the need for Washington to be clear about whether it's demanding denuclearization before talks or would accept a testing freeze.

Critics also point out that the North has agreed to denuclearization talks in the past as a way to wring concessions from the West and is likely trying to ease punishing economic sanctions.

The United States and South Korea are due to hold joint war games in coming weeks after agreeing to suspend them during the Olympics and the upcoming Paralympics, which end on March 18. North Korea hates the military exercises, which it considers a rehearsal for an invasion, and it's unclear how their resumption may affect the current efforts to promote peace.

Alexandra Bell, of the Center

for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, said there's a precedent for canceling the exercises or reducing the scale of the drills.

"Based on previous North Korea statements and actions, it is difficult to believe they are ready to give up their nuclear weapons program now," she said in an email. "In the early stages, formal talks should focus on further reducing tensions and coming to smaller-scale agreements, such as a freeze for freeze" where both sides agree not to hold military exercises or test missiles/nuclear weapons."

The most recent summit was in 2007 when then South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun traveled to Pyongyang to meet with Kim Jong Il, the current leader's father. South Korea's former leader Kim Dae-jung, who won a Nobel Prize for what was dubbed a "sunshine policy" with the North, held the first summit with Kim Jong Il in 2000 in Pyongyang.

gamekim@stripes.com
twitter:@kingamel

MILITARY

Senators demand answers on Russia plan

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Senators grilled the top intel chief Tuesday, pushing for details of a U.S. plan to stave off attempts of Russian meddling and cyberattacks.

In a tense congressional hearing examining worldwide threats, the lawmakers expressed frustration that the U.S., hampered by President Donald Trump, hasn't done enough to address past and future Russian cyberattacks.

Director of National Intelligence Daniel Coats testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that while counterintelligence work is underway, the details of those operations are classified.

"The American people deserve to know whether or not the president directed his top intelligence officials to effectively counter this continuing act of war on our country," Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., said in a sharp exchange with Coats.

The comments come a week after a hearing before the same committee when U.S. Cyber Command Chief Adm. Mike Rogers said Russia has paid little for its interference in the 2016 elections, and that he hasn't been authorized by Trump to combat future attempts.

There are growing concerns that Russia will target this year's elections and that the U.S. hasn't done enough to counter that effort.

"We're taking steps, but we're probably not doing enough," Rogers told the committee last week.

Coats stopped short of contradicting Rogers. The director said he represents a much larger coalition of U.S. intelligence agencies than Rogers. Coats said Trump has given a general mandate.

"Much of what is being done ... would fall into a classified area," he said. "The president told me that my job is to go to the top of the 17 intelligence agencies ... that provide that intelligence information to the president and to our policymakers."

While Coats couldn't say which U.S. agen-

cy would take the lead in such an effort, he said operations to counter Russian cyberattacks continue.

Coats compared Russia to a bear coming out of hibernation, saying the U.S. remains under attack through these cyber operations.

This, as Russia continues to grow its influence through power grabs in conflicts with neighboring nations.

"Thanks to (Russian President) Vladimir Putin, we're getting a wake-up call. The Russian bear came out of hibernation," Coats said. "It was hungry and it started grabbing countries like Crimea ... now the fighting in Ukraine, issues in Georgia."

Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., countered that Rogers isn't being directed to use the tools necessary to fight that bear, thanks to Trump's indirection.

The Trump administration has declined to issue more sanctions against Russia, despite a new law directing the president to do so, she said.

Trump "doesn't appear to be interested in hunting bears. Whether it comes to sanctions or direct actions, Russia is not feeling the might of the United States of America."

Coats countered that planning is underway.

"There are ongoing discussions among a number of our agencies — the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, the State Department and others — relative to the cyberthreat," he said. "The White House has been engaged."

Several Democrats on the panel were not buying Coats' explanation. "The discussions are ongoing; it's just the plan of action and the direction to take action seems to be missing," said Sen. Jack Reed, of Rhode Island, the committee's ranking Democrat. "And somewhere in that is ultimately the president."

Sen. Mike Hirono, D-Hawaii, agreed. "This is a not a top priority for the president," Hirono told Coats. "You're doing your best to be a very statesmanlike about it."

grisales.claudia@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @cgrisaless



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley testifies before the Senate Armed Services Committee during a hearing Tuesday on Capitol Hill.

Intel official: Russia, China seek fast, futuristic weapons

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. defense intelligence official said Tuesday that it's not just Russia but China, too, that is seeking faster, futuristic weapons to challenge America's know-how of state-of-the-art military technology.

Army Lt. Gen. Robert Ashley told the Senate Armed Services Committee that China is developing long-range cruise missiles — some capable of reaching supersonic speeds. He said China also is working on a bomber with a nuclear mission, which would give Beijing a nuclear triad of land, air and sea-based nuclear weapon systems.

China and Russia present the greatest threat of developing state-of-the-art military capabilities.

Last week, Russian President Vladimi-

mir Putin unveiled new strategic weapons he claims can't be intercepted. One is a hypersonic glide vehicle, which could fly 20 times faster than the speed of sound and make sharp maneuvers to avoid being detected by missile defense systems.

"Developments in hypersonic propulsion will revolutionize warfare by providing the ability to strike targets more quickly, at greater distances and with greater firepower," Ashley said. "China is also developing increasingly sophisticated ballistic missile warheads and hypersonic glide vehicles in an attempt to counter ballistic missile defense systems."

From The Associated Press

Report: Russia still has the edge over NATO on alliance's eastern flank

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

NATO remains outgunned by Russia on its eastern flank despite having spent years bolstering its forces in that region, according to a new Rand Corp. study.

"A more robust posture designed to considerably raise the cost of military adventurism for any one or more NATO member states is worthy of consideration," said the think tank's report, which seeks to gauge how allies stack up to Russia.

The report stops short of making specific recommendations on the types of forces and capabilities that should be added along NATO's eastern flank. But in other work by Rand, security analysts have said additional combat brigades should be deployed to the region.

The U.S. and NATO have been working for nearly four years to reconfigure alliance forces in Europe, with more units deployed to potential hot spots such as the Baltic states and Poland. After Russia intervened in Ukraine in 2014, NATO embarked upon its largest military reorganization since the Cold War, with four alliance battle

groups operating in the Baltics and Poland, a new quick-reaction force and a U.S. Army brigade on full-time rotation along NATO's eastern edge.

Still, those moves haven't kept pace with Russia's own military advances, according to the Rand report, titled "Assessing the Conventional Force Imbalance in Europe." As Russia has modernized its military in recent years, Moscow has moved newer and more capable ground and air force units near the borders of NATO allies Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — all small countries with tiny militaries, the report said.

In the Baltics, allies have roughly 32,000 combat troops, compared with 78,000 Russians in the vicinity whose high readiness and mobility could overwhelm allies, the report said. Russia also has an advantage in tanks in the region, with 757 main battle tanks, compared with NATO's 129.

And while NATO members have spent most of the past 15 years developing lighter forces that can be more easily deployed to places like Afghanistan, Russia has retained a "combined-arms force that emphasizes mobility

and firepower," the report said.

Russia still has the advantage in conflicts between mechanized forces close to NATO's border because of its ability to deploy with speed, it said.

Russia can also mass forces within its borders, leveraging its rail and road networks to "enjoy a significant time-distance advantage in generating combat forces during the opening period of a crisis," the report said. Moreover, NATO's numerical advantage in fighter planes would be put "at high risk" because of Russia's "advantage in advanced integrated air defenses."

For the U.S. and its allies in Europe, the challenge is finding a balance of force that can deter potential Russian aggression without further raising tensions. Moscow, which has repeatedly stated it has no designs on NATO territory, has lashed out at the alliance's moves near its borders, calling them provocative.

The Rand report is largely focused on the imbalance of conventional forces with Russia around the Baltics. There is a growing sense within NATO, however, that Moscow poses a larger threat in nonconventional areas such as cyberattacks, electronic warfare and

information operations. NATO is developing plans for a new cyber operations center at its military headquarters in Mons, Belgium, to deal with those concerns. For now, allies don't appear to have any plans for a more sizable buildup of conventional forces in the Baltics.

"We will not match Russia soldier for soldier, tank for tank or plane for plane. Our aim is to prevent conflict, not to provoke it," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said at a meeting of defense ministers in 2017.

vandiver.john@starsandstripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver



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Map: Kadena Gate 1, Camp Foster, China Restaurant, Family Eat, Hamagawa Lodge, Family House, KFC, San An, HAWAII

MILITARY



Courtesy of Pixabay

China announced an 8.1 percent increase in military spending over last year, prompting the head of the U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet to call for more transparency about the budget.

US Navy chief calls for more transparency from China on military budget

By WYATT OLSON
AND TYLER HLAIVAC
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The head of the Navy's Pacific Fleet is calling for more transparency from China after the country announced its biggest jump in military spending in three years.

Beijing will increase the spending by 8.1 percent over last year, amounting to a 2018 defense budget of roughly \$175 billion, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported Monday.

Xinhua cited a budget report submitted Monday to the first session of the 13th National People's Congress now underway in Beijing.

The defense budget follows increases of 7.6 percent in 2016 and 7 percent in 2017, Xinhua said.

While China's actual defense spending remains opaque, the country has undertaken a decadeslong quest to modernize its military and expand its air and naval capabilities worldwide.

In recent years, China has built artificial islands in the South China Sea, militarizing them with airstrips, ports, hangars and other military-related infrastructure.

During a press conference Tuesday in Tokyo, Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift called on Beijing to explain its military spending, which he said causes anxiety in the region.

"That lack of transparency is most troubling," he said. "There's a lot of questions on the minds of countries in the region of what exactly does this mean? People shouldn't be left guessing as to what exactly the objective of these increases is."

Swift also called on China to clarify its intentions in the South China Sea.

"The establishment of these military bases, the sense once again is to what purpose?" he said.

"We see time and time again this reinforcement of the views that suggest this is a military focus, not an economic focus, not a dip-

lomatic focus; it's not to ensure the navigation of all ships."

Swift said the United States and other countries must "wait and see" how the "establishment of such a significant military presence" affects freedom of navigation in the South China Sea.

China's annual military spending runs a far second behind the United States, according to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, which tabulates the world's defense outlays.

The U.S. defense budget in 2017 was \$602.8 billion, compared with China's \$150.5 billion, according to IISS' calculations.

Xinhua said China actually spent \$161.87 billion in national defense last year, or about 1.3 percent of its gross domestic product.

China's per capita spending on defense was lower than most other major countries, Zhang Yesui, a 13th Congress spokesperson, told reporters Sunday in Beijing.

Xinhua said that China's recent reorganization of its military cut in half the number of "land force personnel among the entire" People's Liberation Army. The number of PLA officers was cut by 30 percent.

In January, the Department of Defense published a summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which singled out China and Russia as revanchist powers that are the "central challenge to U.S. prosperity and security."

"China is a strategic competitor using predatory economics to intimidate its neighbors while militarizing features in the South China Sea," the strategy said. "It is increasingly clear that China and Russia want to shape a world consistent with their authoritarian model — gaining veto authority over other nations' economic, diplomatic, and security decisions."

China decried the U.S. strategic posture as "Cold War mentality."

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
hlaivac.tyler@stripes.com

AFRICOM chief: Expect China to build more bases in Africa

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The top general overseeing U.S. operations in Africa said Tuesday that he expects China's military to build more bases on the continent as it seeks to extend its influence.

Last year, China opened its first overseas base in the small, but strategic East African country of Djibouti, which also hosts the U.S. military's main operational hub.

Gen. Thomas Waldhauser predicted Tuesday that China will expand beyond Djibouti, where it now operates just "outside our gate."

"Djibouti happens to be the first. There will be more," Waldhauser told members of the House Armed Services Committee.

For more than a decade, China has been a major presence in Africa, funding massive public works projects in places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo while also investing in mineral extraction and other business ventures.

In Djibouti, China operates a naval base, but concerns have emerged that Beijing also seeks to take control of Djibouti's commercial port. Last month, Djibouti canceled a contract with a Dubai firm that now runs the facility. During testimony Tuesday, lawmakers said the concern is Djibouti might "gift" the port to the Chinese.

Waldhauser said the United



CARLOS BONGIOANNI/Stars and Stripes

Gen. Thomas Waldhauser, commander of U.S. Africa Command, testifies before the House Committee on Armed Services during a hearing Tuesday on Capitol Hill in Washington.

States has received assurances from Djibouti that is not the case. However, the general acknowledged China has influence and a degree of leverage as it pours millions of dollars into public works projects, such as building a new soccer stadium and a shopping mall.

"If the Chinese took over that port, the concern could be significant if there are restrictions on our ability to use it," Waldhauser said.

The United States has a 30-year lease to conduct operations at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, which borders Somalia and serves

as a logistics launching pad for eastern Africa.

AFRICOM's strategy in Africa is now taking a larger accounting of China as "the strategic environment becomes more crowded and competitive," Waldhauser said. "We will never outspend the Chinese on the continent."

However, one method of gaining influence in the region is through humanitarian and development efforts, the general said.

"Small things go a long way on the African continent," Waldhauser said.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

AFRICOM: Report to say special ops team didn't get required senior command OK

FROM FRONT PAGE

The Oct. 4 ambush in a remote stretch of terrain in western Niger has brought increased scrutiny to military efforts in Africa.

The Associated Press on Monday reported that AFRICOM's investigative report would conclude that the special operations team on the ground in Niger didn't get required senior command approval for its mission to capture a high-level Islamic State militant.

The investigation is expected to call for a more senior level approval within AFRICOM for conducting missions deemed of higher risk.

Still, while there are scores of extremists groups in Africa, with a range of alliances and agendas, military officials acknowledge that none of them currently poses a direct threat to the United States.

"Why should we care?" Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, asked Waldhauser during the hearing. Is there anything in Africa that "justifies sending United States men and women in there...at risk of their lives?"

Waldhauser said the goal is to

contain extremists in places such as Niger, Mali and Somalia and develop local forces to lead the fight against them.

"At the present time they do not have the capability to conduct operations in the United States, but they certainly aspire to do that," he said. "We are trying to prevent something from happening before it does."

During the past year, the military has stepped up missions in Africa. Troop numbers have steadily climbed in Niger and Somalia, where more than 30 air strikes were conducted in 2017.

In Libya, a small number of U.S. troops also operate a counterterrorism mission, Waldhauser said.

While the U.S. seeks to bolster the standing of Libya's fragile government, there is concern that Russia is seeking a foothold there with weapons sales and a presence on NATO's southern doorstep.

The Russians could try to "squeeze out" the U.S., Waldhauser said.

vandiver.john@stripes.com
Twitter: @john_vandiver

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Data raise questions on US efforts in counterterrorism

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — Data the Pentagon issued last year to spotlight the success of operations against militant groups in Afghanistan were inaccurate, raising questions about the real progress of the secretive counterterrorism campaign being conducted by the U.S. and Afghan military.

Key figures in the by-the-numbers look at U.S. and Afghan counterterrorism missions in the second half of 2017, which have been published by prominent news outlets, were wrong, defense officials confirmed after Stars and Stripes pointed out discrepancies. The incorrect data — including a breakdown of independent and joint raids and a body count of enemy fighters — were released in an unclassified December report to Congress titled “Enhancing Security and Stability in Afghanistan.”

A corrected report was quietly issued in late January, though it also appeared to include errors, such as missing or conflicting data.

Weeks later, the cause of the mistakes remains unclear — at least some could be the result of editing mistakes — but the episode highlights increasing difficulties in obtaining data about U.S. and Afghan operations, even from records meant to hold the military accountable to the 16-year war’s congressional overseers.

There are no precise numbers in Afghanistan,” said Jonathan Schroden, a researcher at Arlington, Va.-based CNA and director of the nonprofit research organization’s special operations program. “It’s the nature of what you’re dealing with over there.”

Schroden has crunched Afghan numbers for years. In this case, he said, the information may be off because the Pentagon relied on “notoriously inaccurate, delayed, miscategorized, mislabeled” Afghan military reports. “Trying to make sense of all that is a very challenging prospect.”

Lt. Col. Kone Faulkner, a military spokesman in Kabul, acknowledged that something was “lost in translation” when raw figures were formulated into a two-paragraph snapshot of the battle against terrorists.

However, weeks after Stars and Stripes raised questions about the supposed fixes, officials in Washington have been slow to make further changes.

The report’s two versions were on the Pentagon’s website Tuesday, and there appear to be no markings identifying the revised one. Only by delving into the details of the differences became apparent.

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www.stripes.com/go/addup

‘Significant growth’

The original data showed, for example, that despite years of close U.S. mentoring, Afghanistan’s most-elite units conducted missions on their own only about 17 percent of the time. The later version upped that share to 53 percent, suggesting a more capable force, but it, too, included contradictory numbers.

The mix-up comes as the military withheld details in January’s quarterly Special Inspector General report on U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, such as security forces casualty and attrition data. Measures of insurgent-held territory were also redacted, though officials later said that was done in error.

The U.S. commander in the country, U.S. Central Command’s top general and other defense officials signed off on the December report, which Congress has required twice a year since 2015. It provides detail on U.S. strategy, outlines threats and assesses the Kabul government’s security forces.

A detailed summary of counterterrorism operations was added this time to highlight the recent operational success of Afghan special security forces — elite U.S.-trained army, police and air units — said Air Force Lt. Col. Mike Andrews, a Pentagon spokesman.

They “demonstrated significant growth and increased capability (and) defeated the enemy during every one of their combat engagements,” he said. That was the “impetus” for expanding U.S. training and advising efforts, part of the Trump administration’s more aggressive regional strategy announced in August.

But the original data understated the presumed success story of those special units, which the report said made up “a small fraction” of the country’s security forces but conducted the bulk of the offensive operations last year.

Initially, data showed they operated on their own on just one in six missions between June and December. Some 1,200 operations seemed to have been omitted, though, casting doubt on that rate’s accuracy.

The corrected report nearly tripled the number of independent Afghan operations. Despite that better ratio, the numbers mean that U.S. special operations troops were still assisting their most capable local partners on the battlefield nearly half the time.

Most of the 14,000 Americans



CONNOR MENDEZ/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Afghan commandos assigned to 1st Special Operations Kandak clear a training compound during breaching training in Laghman province, Afghanistan, on Feb. 13.



DOUGLAS ELLIS/Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Afghan 8th commandos clear compounds in Kapisa province, Afghanistan, on Feb. 17. The commandos continue to place military pressure on the Taliban across Afghanistan.

deployed here support NATO’s Resolute Support train, advise and assist mission, largely away from the battlefield. Under a separate counterterrorism mission, a special operations task force of about 2,000 troops trains the elite government forces and accompanies tactical-level units on “certain missions,” the report said.

Officials believe it cements security gains and builds better partnerships, the report said. They believe similar methods soon to be adopted within the broader Resolute Support mission will “replicate our past success with the Afghan special forces.”

Some observers doubt the long-term success of that approach, which will put advisers closer to fighting than most have been in recent years.

“All it’s doing is pushing American enablers forward,” said Jason Dempsey, an adjunct senior fellow at the nonpartisan Center for a New American Security in Washington. The former Army officer was doubtful it would do more than give a false picture of Afghan competence, while leaving them dependent on U.S. capabilities.

Faulkner, the military spokes-

man in Kabul, said operational data such as those in the December report had not been collected during earlier periods, making it difficult to measure progress in weaning Afghans off U.S. assistance.

‘Not particularly illuminating’

The Pentagon’s later tweaks to the data, meanwhile, seem to have introduced new errors and confusing gaps, making it hard to draw firm conclusions.

It says U.S. special operations troops “advised or enabled” 2,450 Afghan ground operations, contradicting another line that says the Afghans conducted 1,301 of those 2,450 operations without help. That line also lists a lower number of ground operations without explaining the reason for conflicting tallies.

In another case, counts appear to be off by some 400 operations in a line breaking down how many of the total ground raids and supporting U.S. strikes targeted each of four groups: an Islamic State affiliate, the Taliban, the Haqqani network — an especially brutal arm of the Taliban — and “other

insurgent networks.” More than 20 such groups operate in the region.

“The difference in the numbers is the fact that there are other enemy in Afghanistan besides (ISIS, the Taliban and the Haqqani network),” Andrews said of about 135 missing U.S. strikes.

The list of ground operations seemed off by almost 280 from the total. “Within the operational reporting there are some missions that do not designate the (targeted) organization.”

The report did have a category for “other” enemies but not one for unspecified targets.

After several inquiries for more than a month, Andrews confirmed or clarified a few key figures in late February, including that the Afghans conducted 2,450 ground operations, fewer than half with the U.S. task force’s support. The task force also conducted about 560 precision strikes to support them.

Pentagon officials have not said whether the report will be corrected again for clarity.

Beyond being erroneous, the numbers don’t seem to say much about progress in defeating the militant groups, analysts said.

The data are not “particularly illuminating,” Schroden said. Both versions list 450 enemies killed and more than 300 captured but lack context, such as the size of the enemy force or its ability to regenerate after such losses.

“I don’t think the numbers that they cite are any more useful than body counts were in Vietnam, for example,” he said. They’re “indicators of activity,” not measures of progress.

Kill counts give the “illusion of success,” Dempsey said, but he wouldn’t discourage disclosure of those and the other numbers in the report.

“The public deserves to know what’s being done in their name,” Dempsey said.

garland.chad@stripes.com
Twitter: @chadgarland

EUROPE



PHOTOS BY MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

Clockwise from top: German mayors and community leaders and U.S. and German army soldiers pose together during their visit on base to watch artillery fire during exercise Dynamic Front at Grafenwoehr, Germany, on Monday; attendees are shown an aged observation tower; and U.S. Army representatives display different types of artillery rounds.



German community leaders watch artillery demo

BY MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany — Soldiers with the 7th Army Training Command on Monday invited local German mayors, police officials and others to watch live artillery fire and get a glimpse of life behind the scenes on post.

The visit was partly aimed at

easing the concerns of residents about increased noise and traffic levels, as the base is hosting an additional 3,700 soldiers from 26 countries for the Dynamic Front exercise, a large-scale, U.S.-led drill that began Feb. 23 and ends on Saturday.

For Stefan Horndasch, deputy commissioner from Ansbach county, the visit shed light on what was happening so close to his community.

“We wonder what is going on when we hear more helicopters and artillery firing,” he said. “When the U.S. (Army) invited us to come on base and see what is happening, we wanted to come.”

Many community leaders, including Horndasch, had no idea how many countries were participating in the exercise.

“It was very interesting for me to find that this was not just

training for the U.S. Army but training for many nations in a very big [drill],” Horndasch said. Knowing the reason behind the increased activity reassured the officials of the exercise’s importance, he said.

For the U.S. soldiers demonstrating their artillery, the presence of German officials gave them the opportunity to showcase their prowess with the guns.

Spc. Mason Leverenz, a cannoneer with the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, fired about a dozen rounds in front of the crowd of onlookers.

“It’s nice to show off what we do,” he said. “It’s great to be part of such a big event and to know that all these people care about what we’re doing.”

egnash.martin@stripes.com
Twitter: @Marty_Stripes

MILITARY

Marines deploy F-35B fighters on ship in Pacific for 1st time

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps has deployed its most advanced, multiple strike fighter aboard a Navy ship for the first time in the Pacific.

A detachment of F-35B Lightning II with Fighter Attack Squadron 121 — based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan — landed aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Wasp on Sunday and Monday.

The Navy, which did not disclose the location of the Wasp or the number of F-35B fighters landing on it, touted the event as a new era of “up-gunned” air-sea capability.

“Pairing F-35B Lightning II with the Wasp represents one of the most significant leaps in warfighting capability for the Navy-Marine Corps team in our lifetime,” Rear Adm. Brad Cooper, Task Force 76 commander, said in a Navy statement. “This 5th-generation stealth jet is extremely versatile and will greatly enhance and expand our operational capabilities.”

The F-35Bs — capable of short takeoffs and vertical landings — are under the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, the only forward-deployed MEU in the region, the Navy said.

“This is a historic deployment,”

To view video of this ‘historic deployment,’ go to:
[stripes.com/go/wasp](https://www.stripes.com/go/wasp)



Col. Tye Wallace, 31st MEU commander, said in the statement. “The F-35B is the most capable aircraft ever to support a Marine rifleman on the ground.”

The stealth fighters are intended to both make precision strikes inland and to support Marines inserting ashore, the Navy said. They will also provide air defense for the strike group.

The pilots of the fighter attack squadron are scheduled to conduct a series of qualification flights on the Wasp in upcoming days, the Navy said.

After those qualifications, the F-35Bs and about 2,300 Marines from the 31st MEU will deploy aboard ships of the Wasp strike group for operations in the Indo-Pacific region, the Navy said.

The F-35B further advances the Pacific Fleet’s goal of an up-gunned expeditionary strike group, which aims to provide lethality and survivability to the traditional three-ship amphibious ready group, the Navy said.

It does that by pairing troop-carrying amphibious ships with surface vessels, such as guided-missile destroyers. The strike

group is intended to effectively defend against undersea, surface and air threats, with firepower still available for an offensive strike from sea, the Navy said.

The beefed-up capabilities are in part a response to the growing military dominance by China in the South China Sea, where it has built artificial islands and constructed facilities that could be used by the military, particularly by fighter jets.

The arrival of the F-35B culminates testing and shipboard structural modifications on the Wasp that began in 2013, the Navy said. The ship completed an overhaul last year and on Saturday departed Sasebo, Japan, where it is forward-deployed.

Scheduled to support the strike group’s operations are the guided-missile destroyers USS Dewey and USS Sterett, which both carry helicopter strike squadrons.

“With the specific upgrades Wasp has received, the Navy Marine Corps team in the Pacific is better positioned than ever before to support our commitment to the security of Japan and the region,” Wasp commander Capt. Colby Howard said in the Navy statement.

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
Twitter: @WyattWolson



MICHAEL MOLINA/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

An F-35B Lightning II with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 touches down on the USS Wasp as a second F-35B makes its approach on Sunday.



Mason Roy/Courtesy of the U.S. Marine Corps

Marine Cpl. Joseph Butler receives a hemoglobin test before donating blood at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

Blood donated at Iwakuni could save Japanese lives

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — American blood will help save Japanese lives thanks to an effort by the two nations’ Red Cross associations.

Fifteen servicemembers were among nearly 50 people, including American and Japanese base workers, who donated blood Tuesday at Iwakuni’s Marine Memorial Chapel. The blood will be used to save lives in nine Japanese prefectures, said Hiroyuki Oshikawa, a mechanical engineer at the base who helps coordinate the drives.

The most likely recipients

are local nationals, but servicemembers at Iwakuni could also get some of the blood if they’re injured and treated at a local hospital, said Tammie Pech, an American Red Cross regional program manager.

One pint of blood can save up to three people. It’s a gift to anyone in need and a chance to give back to the community that supports the base, she said.

The American Red Cross isn’t allowed to accept blood donations in Japan, so the Iwakuni operation is run by the Japanese Red Cross, and the blood is stored off base where it’s needed most, Pech said.

bolinger.james@stripes.com
Twitter: @bolinger2004

AMVETS announces \$700K initiative to prevent suicides

By NIKKI WENTLING
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The veterans organization AMVETS announced Tuesday an estimated \$700,000 suicide-prevention initiative to find veterans who could be struggling with a mental health crisis and get them treatment.

A six-person team of licensed registered nurses, called the HEAL team, will travel across the country to try to intervene with veterans who haven’t sought treatment through the Department of Veterans Affairs but need it, said Sherman Gillums, chief strategy officer with AMVETS. They’ll also take calls and emails from veterans facing barriers to VA mental health care.

Carolyn Clancy, the executive in charge of the VA health care system, said the effort could help reduce stigmas about the VA that keeps veterans from going there for help.

“I can’t overemphasize how important it is to have this kind of assistance on the frontlines connecting veterans to our services,” she said.

“Having another veteran from another organization you can trust saying, ‘It’s OK, this is actually a good thing to go do,’ means

far, far more than what anyone from the VA could necessarily share.

“It’s a different source of credibility.”

According to VA data, an average of 20 veterans died from suicide each day in 2014. Of the 20, 14 were not connected to VA services.

The VA has recently been attempted to get more veterans enrolled in mental health care. Last summer, the agency began providing urgent mental health care to veterans with other-than-honorable discharges — a group that was previously ineligible for the treatment.

President Donald Trump signed an executive order in January that paves the way for servicemembers to be enrolled automatically in VA mental health care for one year once they leave the military.

VA Secretary David Shulkin said Tuesday during the AMVETS event that he would share specific plans about how the VA will implement the order with Trump this week.

The VA is also attempting to hire more mental health care providers, but the agency is having difficulty keeping jobs filled. In 2017, the VA hired 900 employ-

ees but lost another 945.

The AMVETS announcement also comes at a time of turmoil at VA headquarters, where divisions have emerged between Shulkin and White House appointees who want to see him removed.

The rift became public following a watchdog report Feb. 14 that detailed findings of ethical violations by Shulkin and his former chief of staff during a European trip last summer.

Major veterans organizations that met with Shulkin on Tuesday and White House chief of staff John Kelly last week continue to believe Shulkin’s job is not in jeopardy.

Shulkin spoke only briefly at Tuesday’s event, saying suicide prevention is his top clinical priority for the VA and that more needed to be done.

“It’s these types of collaborations that are going to have the biggest impact,” he said. “We know that mental health care saves lives.”

The new HEAL team, led by AMVETS’ Chief Medical Executive Lana McKenzie, will begin taking inquiries March 19 at 1-833-VET-HEAL and VETHEAL@amvets.org.

wentling.nikki@stripes.com
Twitter: @nikkiwentling

MILITARY

1st aircraft carrier sunk in WWII found off Australian coast

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Searchers have found the wreckage of the USS Lexington, the aircraft carrier sunk 76 years ago near Australia during the world's first carrier-versus-carrier battle.

The Lexington was critically damaged by Japanese forces during the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 8, 1942, and the U.S. Navy was forced to scuttle it.

The ship's wreck was located Sunday by the research vessel Petrel, which is owned by billionaire explorer Paul Allen.

The wreck rested about 500 miles off the eastern coast of Australia and about 2 miles below the water's surface.

Images released by the searchers show a wreck with stunningly intact features, including a 5-inch gun with the rifling still visible inside the barrel. The ship's name remains visible on several areas, and an intact fighter plane is still emblazoned with U.S. star emblems.

"Lexington was on our priority list because she was one of the capital ships that was lost during WWII," Robert Kraft, U.S. Pacific Command, said in a statement. "Based on geography, time of year and other factors, I work with Paul Allen to determine what missions to pursue. We've been planning to locate the Lexington for about six months, and it came together nicely."

Adm. Harry Harris, commander of U.S. Pacific Command,

whose father served on the Lexington and survived the attack, heralded the find.

"As the son of a survivor of the USS Lexington, I offer my congratulations to Paul Allen and the

expedition crew of Research Vessel (R/V) Petrel for locating the 'Lady Lex,' sunk nearly 76 years ago at the Battle of Coral Sea," Harris said in a statement issued from Australia, where he was meeting with that country's military leaders.

"Our Navy's strength comes from those who have gone before. This is our heritage. Our Navy's strength comes from those who serve now."

Adm. Harry Harris, commander, U.S. Pacific Command, and son of Lexington attack survivor

After a series of initial successes in the Pacific — including the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941 — Imperial Japan experienced its first military setback during the Battle

adversaries, such as China. In a memo last year, Deputy Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan said the department would accelerate its move to the cloud as part of an effort to "ensure we are employing emerging technology to meet warfighters' needs and to increase speed and agility in technology development and procurement."

The move to curtail the value of Rean's contract by more than 90 percent comes just two days before the Pentagon is set to host what's known as an "industry day," a chance for companies interested in bidding on the Pentagon's cloud computing contract to hear from government procurement officials.

It follows weeks of criticisms from some in the industry that the procurement wasn't being handled properly — charges that Pentagon officials strongly denied. The criticisms peaked last month when Rean won the \$1 billion contract to migrate defense



COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY/AP

Crewmembers abandon the USS Lexington after the decks of the aircraft carrier sunk in the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942 during World War II.

To view more art and video of the Lexington site, go to: stripes.com/go/lexington



of the Coral Sea.

The Lexington, launched in 1925 as one of America's first aircraft carriers, went down with 35 aircraft aboard, and 216 crewmembers died in the battle.

The Lexington and the USS Yorktown faced three Japanese carriers during the Battle of the Coral Sea, which spanned May 4-8.

The Lexington was hit by multiple torpedoes and bombs during the final day of the battle. Uncontrollable fire on the ship forced the crew to abandon it.

The USS Phelps sank the hobbled Lexington with torpedoes, giving it the dubious distinction of being the first aircraft carrier to sink during the battle.

The Lexington's 2,770 crewmembers were shuttled onto other nearby ships in the U.S. fleet.

The United States also lost the USS Sims and USS Neosho in the battle, with the USS Yorktown sustaining heavy damage.

The Japanese lost one light carrier, the Shoho, and one of its fleet



Courtesy of Paul G. Allen

An intact fighter plane is still emblazoned with U.S. star emblems at the wreckage site.

carriers was heavily damaged.

The Battle of the Coral Sea marked a new era of Navy warfare, where battles would often be fought between carrier-launched planes, with ships never even coming within sight of each other.

Along with the Battle of Midway a month later, the Battle of the Coral Sea ended Japan's advance

in the Pacific.

Since deploying in 2017, the Petrel has made several discoveries of military ships in the Philippine Sea, including wreckage from the USS Ward, which fired the first shot of World War II at Pearl Harbor.

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
Twitter: @WyattWilson

Amid criticism, Pentagon slashes cloud computing contract

By CHRISTIAN DAVENPORT
AND AARON GREGG

The Washington Post

Faced with criticism over how it awarded a contract to move agencies to the cloud, the Pentagon on Monday slashed a deal awarded to an Amazon partner, cutting the amount from nearly \$1 billion to no more than \$65 million, while dramatically limiting the scope of work.

When the Pentagon awarded the \$950 million contract to Herndon, Va.-based Rean Cloud last month it was immediately hit with criticism for showing favoritism to a partner of Amazon Web Services, or AWS, which industry officials fear has an inside track on the Pentagon's cloud computing work.

Moving its computing systems to the cloud has become a priority for the Pentagon, which says it will allow it to innovate faster at a time when it fears it is losing its technological edge over potential

partners. Rivals said it made no sense to pick a company to migrate the services when the ultimate cloud provider had not yet been chosen.

In response to the Rean award, Oracle filed a bid protest with the Government Accountability Office last month that called the procurement "an egregious abuse" of the procurement process for a contract it charged was "shrouded in secrecy." And it argued that Rean "serves as a front for AWS" and that its close relationship to AWS creates a conflict of interest.

Industry officials also lamented the fact that the Pentagon did little to announce the award to Rean, which largely became public when the company put out a news release touting the contract.

Officials with Rean and AWS, which already holds a \$600 million contract to provide cloud services for the CIA, did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Last month, Rean founding

partner Sekhar Puli said that while the vast majority of the company's federal work has been with AWS, this contract was specifically awarded to allow his company to work with any cloud provider that agencies might ask for.

"There is a perception that this is an Amazon contract, but there is little to no truth on that because we were very careful on wording the contract to say it could work with any cloud service provider," Puli said. "We are not deciding on what cloud the customer should be on. They can pick any cloud they want, and our platform would support all of that."

But since the Pentagon has not yet awarded the larger contract, estimated to be worth billions of dollars over many years, for the Pentagon's cloud system, it shouldn't have awarded such a large contract to start moving its systems to the cloud, rivals argued.

"If in fact you're going to have

an open competition and an industry day to have a multivendor opportunity for the cloud, then how does it make sense to spend a billion dollars to move to Amazon's cloud before you've made the decision of what cloud you're moving to?" Oracle Senior Vice President Ken Glueck said at the time. "You would think they'd pick what cloud they want to go to first, then decide what migration service system needed to move, if any."

On Monday, the Pentagon backed away from its initial award, saying in a statement that after reviewing the contract, it decided "the agreement should be more narrowly tailored" so that Rean would build a prototype service for a single agency, the U.S. Transportation Command, instead of many different agencies within the Department of Defense.

On Monday, Glueck, the Oracle senior vice president, said the move was a step in the right direction.

NATION

Nor'easter reveals the remains of 1700s ship

By ALEX HORTON
The Washington Post

Every now and then, a storm ravages the coast of southern Maine so totally that it provides a glimpse of Colonial history.

The recent nor'easter that killed eight people also excavated sand from the coastline of York's Shore Sands Beach, revealing the hull of a Revolutionary War-era ship, its remaining planks protruding from the sand like the ribs of a starving dog.

The ship rests about 20 yards from a parking lot near the shoreline, York Police Department Detective Matthew J. Calcina told The Washington Post on Monday. He snapped a photo of the ship, with snow-capped hotels and homes in the background.

This isn't even the first time this has happened with this particular ship, the department wrote on Facebook. The ship has become a local point of historical pride, revealing itself only after devastating storms.

The wreck was visible in 1958, leading to speculation about its origins.

Then, two decades later, another spring nor'easter provided a closer glimpse of the vessel. "Based on the type of construction, marine archaeologist Warren Riess hypothesized that the vessel is a sloop of about Revolutionary War age," Sharon Cummins wrote for Seacoast Online.

Another storm did the same in 2007. "The old relic appears infrequently, adding to its mystique," Cummins wrote in 2013. "Each time, roughly once every decade or two, new maritime history buffs are born."

Sloops played an important role in the early days of the Continental Navy. The



Courtesy of the York (Maine) Police Department

A Revolutionary War-era ship appears on the coastline of York's Shore Sands Beach in Maine.

ships, armed with cannons and swivel guns, harassed Royal Navy warships that delivered supplies and menaced revolutionaries on the shore.

One sloop, the Success, was involved in one of the first naval battles of the war on May 14, 1775, just 25 days after the opening shots of the revolution at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Capt. Nathaniel Pope and Capt. Daniels Egery led a small force in capturing two British sloops and

their crews, the Naval History and Heritage Command wrote.

Those ships mirrored the Army's inexperienced, upstart nature. Many ships then were private vessels given a letter of marque — essentially permission to attack foreign vessels that would otherwise be illegal piracy. That emboldened local Capt. Jeremiah O'Brian, whose crew of men from present day Machias, Maine, climbed aboard the Unity sloop and captured the

crew of the HMS Margaretta that June.

O'Brian hunted up and down the Massachusetts coast during the war, the command said.

Overall, the Continental Navy did not experience much success because of inexperience and ineptitude in the face of Britain's naval forces, the command noted. But their few victorious skirmishes and tall tales chipped away at the seemingly omnipresent image of the powerful Royal Navy, then the world's finest.

In addition to the Maine sloop, modern storms have been a boon to historians, scientists and archaeologists who traverse the depths to solve confounding mysteries.

The last known slave ship, the Clotilda, was burned and partially buried off the Alabama coast in 1860. Its final resting place was a mystery until a January storm system that included a bomb cyclone swept away water and mud like rock dust from a fossil, revealing what is likely the ship.

Also, after Hurricane Harvey pounded the Texas coast, a beach was introduced to a new horror near Galveston: a faceless, sharp-toothed sea creature that looked like a prehistoric oddity to some. It turned out to be a fang-tooth snake-eel.

And yet, with the several appearances throughout the years, not much is known about the uncovered sloop.

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission declared it an archaeological site. But a database search of 2,500 shipwrecks across the globe, from the Revolution to the nuclear age, did not return any records indicating it was a known American sloop. Navy history command spokeswoman Sandra Gall told The Washington Post on Monday.

Businessman Shkreli ordered to forfeit \$7.36 million

By ANDREW KESHNER
New York Daily News

NEW YORK — Martin Shkreli got smacked with a \$7.36 million forfeiture order Monday — a ruling that could put a serious dent in the Pharma Bro's prized hip-hop collection.

Days ahead of Shkreli's sentencing for his securities fraud conviction, U.S. District Judge Kiyo Matsumoto in Brooklyn, N.Y.,

dropped the news she was putting him on the hook for millions and letting the feds latch onto his "substitute assets" if he can't pay up.

Prosecutors say the pricey possessions include Shkreli's single-edition "Once Upon A Time in Shaolin," by the Wu-Tang Clan, J.J. Wayne's "The Carter V" and a Pablo Picasso painting.

Shkreli reportedly paid \$2 million for the coveted Wu Tang cuts. The substitute assets also include

a \$5 million brokerage account.

Shkreli fought against forfeiture, noting his hedge fund investors all turned profits in the end.

Matsumoto wasn't buying it. She pointed to Shkreli's trial last summer at which prosecutors unveiled evidence showing that before those rich returns, Shkreli was feeding investors all sorts of bogus data.

In a hearing last month, Matsumoto asked prosecutors if they

had a valuation on the albums.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Claire Kedeshian said she didn't yet.

Matsumoto signed off Monday on a 10-day deadline for Shkreli to tell authorities where the albums and paintings are located.

There was a time when the feds also had their eyes on Shkreli's World War II-era enigma machine. But the code-breaker has already seized and auctioned off by state tax authorities, court pa-

pers said.

Shkreli is set to be sentenced Friday. He's been jailed since September for his \$5,000 price tag on a strand of Hillary Clinton's hair, and he's pushing for a sentence of up to 18 months. Begging for leniency, Shkreli, 34, has vowed to Matsumoto he'll do his "fabulous best to use (his) skills and whatever talents (he) has been blessed with for the betterment of humanity."

Fights break out at Michigan State as groups converge for Spencer speech

By SIMON D. SCHUSTER
AND SUSAN SVRLUGA
The Washington Post

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Fights broke out between white supremacists and protesters Monday as anti-fascist activists, students and community members converged in and around Michigan State University to counter a planned speech by white nationalist Richard Spencer.

Hours before the speech was to begin, police blocked access to the venue as protesters, including some masked anti-fascists, gathered outside, and hundreds marched toward the venue shouting, "Nazis go home."

Scuffles broke out and punches were thrown as some of Spencer's

supporters and people planning to attend the two-hour speech arrived on campus near protesters. People shouted obscenities at white supremacists and at police. Supporters of Spencer were forced by protesters away from the pavilion where he was to speak.

More law enforcement officers arrived, lining both sides of the road leading into the venue, snapping cuffs on people and restoring calm.

But as others arrived to attend the speech, a mob of protesters swarmed around them. A circle of law enforcement officers protected those wishing to go in, but two were pushed to the ground. Another man wanting to attend

the event was pelted with sticks, dirt and cans by protesters.

The Detroit Free Press showed video of a protester kicking the bicycle of an officer, screaming, "F-ing Nazi cops!"

Spencer's National Policy Institute has sought to hold events on college campuses across the country. But several university presidents rejected such requests after he led a torchlight march of people shouting slurs at the University of Virginia in August. The next day, at a rally in Charlottesville, Va., violent clashes with counterprotesters broke out, leaving one dead and dozens injured.

Days later, MSU officials denied Spencer's request to speak at the public university, citing concerns

about safety. But in January, after settling a lawsuit brought by a supporter, the school agreed to allow an event on campus.

"Michigan State is wholly dedicated to freedom of speech, not just as a public institution but as an institution of higher education," university officials explained in a public statement in January. "Here, ideas — not people — are meant to clash and to be evaluated based on their merits."

Spencer's speech comes at a time when tensions are raw over issues of race and politics and national identity, over freedom of speech and the cultural leanings of academia.

In the days before Spencer spoke at the University of Flori-

da, the governor declared a state of emergency. At MSU, Spencer will arrive on a campus in turmoil over a sexual abuse scandal that forced the ouster of the university's longtime president and sparked numerous investigations and lawsuits.

The campus is on spring break this week, which is not a coincidence. The timing and the site — the school's Pavilion for Agriculture and Livestock Education — were chosen to minimize the risk of violence and disruption to campus, according to university officials.

The Pavilion is a small arena well south of the campus developed core. Beyond it is farmland used primarily for research.

NATION

Trump, Canada's leader talk amid tariffs uproar

By KEN THOMAS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — In a remarkably public confrontation, House Speaker Paul Ryan and other Republican allies of President Donald Trump are pleading with him to back away from his threatened international tariffs, which they fear could spark a dangerous trade war. Trump retorted, "We're not backing down."

The president on Monday said U.S. neighbors Canada and Mexico would not be spared from his plans for special import taxes on steel and aluminum, but he held out the possibility of later exempting the long-standing friends if they agree to better terms for the U.S. in talks aimed at revising the North American Free Trade Agreement.

"We've had a very bad deal with Mexico, we've had a very bad deal with Canada. It's called NAFTA," he declared.

The White House said Tuesday that Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau discussed trade and NAFTA during a telephone conversation Monday. Trump emphasized his commit-

ment to a NAFTA that is fair to all three countries, and noted that the current agreement leaves the U.S. with a trade deficit.

Congressional Republicans say any tariffs should be narrow in scope, and they privately warned that Trump's effort could hurt the party's hopes to preserve its majority in the fall elections.

As the president dug in on his position, any potential compromise with foreign trading partners and Republican lawmakers was expected to still include some form of tariffs.

Republican leaders of the House Ways and Means Committee circulated a letter opposing Trump's plan, and GOP congressional leaders suggested they may attempt to prevent the tariffs if the president moves forward.

Trump's pledge to implement tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum imports has rolled financial markets, angered foreign allies and created unusual alliances for a president who blasted unfavorable trade deals during his 2016 campaign. Union leaders and Democratic lawmakers from Rust Belt

states have praised the planned tariffs, joining with advocates within the administration including Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and White House trade adviser Peter Navarro.

But the president has been opposed internally by Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and White House economic adviser Gary Cohn, who warned against penalizing U.S. allies and undercutting the economic benefits of the president's sweeping tax overhaul.

Likewise, the statement from Ryan's office said, "The new tax reform law has boosted the economy, and we certainly don't want to jeopardize those gains."

The tariffs will be made official in the next two weeks, White House officials said.

"Twenty-five percent on steel, and the 10 percent on aluminum, no country exclusions — firm line in the sand," said Navarro, speaking on "Fox and Friends."

Republican critics on Capitol Hill and within the administration argue that industries and their workers that rely on steel and aluminum for their products will suffer. The cost of new appliances,



SEAN KILPATRICK, THE CANADIAN PRESS/AP

A welder fabricates a steel structure at an iron works facility in Ottawa, Ontario, on Monday. President Donald Trump plans to impose stiff tariffs on imported steel and aluminum.

cars and buildings will rise for Americans if the president follows through, they warn, and other nations could retaliate.

The Trade Partnership, a consulting firm, said the tariffs would increase U.S. employment in the steel and aluminum sector by about 33,000 jobs but would cost 179,000 jobs in the rest of the economy.

The end result could erode the president's base of support with rural America and even the blue-

collar workers the president says he's trying to help.

The administration has argued the tariffs are necessary to preserve the American aluminum and steel industries and protect national security. But Trump's comments and tweets early Monday suggested he was also using them as leverage in the current talks to revise NAFTA. The latest round of a nearly yearlong renegotiation effort is concluding this week in Mexico City.

Europe, Canada could retaliate with tariffs on US products

By JAMES MCAULEY
The Washington Post

Slap tariffs on Kentucky bourbon? Halt distribution of Hollywood movies? Block U.S. companies from bidding on foreign government contracts?

These are the kind of measures being suggested in Europe and Canada as they face the prospect of substantial tariffs on their steel and aluminum industries proposed last week by President Donald Trump.

But trade experts say that retaliation is a fine art, where the goal is to inflict economic and political damage on your opponent while not doing your economy too much harm. In economies

as well-integrated as the United States and Europe or the United States and Canada, it's likely to prove a challenge.

"It's increasingly difficult to find areas of U.S. imports that we can do without or where we can provide a domestically manufactured substitute," said Royce Mendes, a senior economist at CIBC Capital Markets in Toronto.

Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, said that if Trump goes ahead with the proposed tariffs of 25 percent on U.S. imports of steel and 10 percent on aluminum, the European Union will respond by imposing tariffs on American products such as Harley-David-

son motorcycles, Kentucky bourbon and Levi's blue jeans.

"We can also do stupid," Juncker said, speaking on German television.

His list hit both prime examples of classic Americana and products manufactured in the home states of key Republican leaders, such as Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

"It's clear that what the EU at this stage wants to do is to hit politically sensitive areas and districts in the U.S. in the hopes that those districts, which have an interest in trading with the EU, would then weigh on the decision in Washington," said Andre Sapir,

a trade expert and former adviser to the EU's directorate general for economic and financial affairs.

"It's to try and change the course of the decision, which has not yet been taken."

Matthew Kronby, a Toronto trade lawyer and former government negotiator, doubts California wine would be a good target because it's from a blue state. He thinks Ottawa is looking to penalize "goods from red states that supported Trump, that are going to cause economic pain to people who are close politically to Trump." Kronby suggested agricultural products as a likely target.

Another alternative would be to ban U.S. companies from bidding

on Canadian defense and infrastructure contracts, Mendes, the economist, said. The advantage to that approach would be that Canadian consumers wouldn't feel the impact in their wallets.

When Boeing launched a complaint against Bombardier, claiming the Canadian company had benefited from unfair government subsidies in the production of its C Series jet, the Canadian government retaliated by saying it wouldn't consider buying fighter jets from Boeing.

That dispute was effectively settled in January, when the U.S. International Trade Commission voted that Boeing was not harmed by Bombardier.

Ex-Trump aide now says he'll probably cooperate with Mueller

By JILL COLVIN and TOM LOBANCIO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A former Trump campaign aide spent much of Monday promising to deftly subpoena from special counsel Robert Mueller, even throwing down the challenge to "arrest me," then backed off his defiance by saying he would probably cooperate in the end.

In an interview Monday night with The Associated Press, Sam Nunberg said he was angry over Mueller's request to have him appear in front of a grand jury and turn over thousands of emails and other communications with other ex-officials,

among them his mentor, Roger Stone. But he predicted that, in the end, he'd find a way to comply.

"I'm going to end up cooperating with them," he said.

It was a reversal from his tone throughout the day, when he lashed out at President Donald Trump and his campaign and threatened to deft Mueller in a series of interviews.

"Why do I have to do it?" Nunberg told CNN of the subpoena. "I'm not cooperating," he said later as he challenged officials to charge him.

In the earlier interviews, Nunberg said he thought Mueller may already have in-

criminating evidence on Trump directly, although he would not say what that evidence might be.

"I think he may have done something during the election," Nunberg told MSNBC of the president, "but I don't know that for sure."

Nunberg also said he thinks former Trump foreign policy adviser Carter Page, a key figure in the Russia investigation, worked with the Kremlin. "I believe that Carter Page was colluding with the Russians," Nunberg said on CNN. "That Carter Page is a weird dude."

In the interviews, Nunberg said he believes the president probably knew about

the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting between his eldest son, top campaign staff and a team of Russians, which Trump has denied. And he blamed Trump for the investigation into Russia meddling, telling MSNBC that he was "responsible for this investigation ... because he was so stupid."

A spokesman for the special counsel's office declined to comment.

Nunberg is the first witness in the ongoing federal Russia investigation to openly promise to deft a subpoena. But he's not the first to challenge Mueller. Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort filed a lawsuit in January challenging Mueller's authority to indict him.

NATION

New Oregon law limits ownership of guns

Restrictions affect domestic abusers

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — A bill prohibiting domestic abusers and people under restraining orders from owning firearms became America's first new gun control law since the Feb. 14 Florida high school massacre.

"Well done, Oregon," Democratic Gov. Kate Brown exclaimed Monday after signing the law on the steps of the state Capitol as some 200 people, including victims of domestic abuse and high school students, applauded and cheered.

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, whose sister was fatally shot by her boyfriend, and Rep. Janeen Sollman, who fled her home as a child when her father was in a violent rage, hugged as they stood behind the governor.

The shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., that killed 17 people has created a wave of young anti-gun activists that has now reached cross-country into the Portland suburb of Lake Oswego traveled 40 miles to stage a gun control rally in the state capital, Salem, on Monday morning.

"We are empowered youth," they chanted while holding signs that read "End gun violence, our lives matter" and "Together we can end gun violence."

"We want to promote change. We're tired of the massive number of school shootings and the massive lack of action," said 15-year-old student Eli Counce.

Scarlett Scott-Buck, another student, said she came to protest "because I'm scared to attend my own school. And I'm here to be an activist for my rights — to live,



Oregon Gov. Kate Brown, on the steps of the state Capitol in Salem, Ore., on Monday, hands out one of the pens she used to sign the first gun control legislation in America since the Feb. 14 massacre at a Florida high school. Oregon high school students were among those who observed the signing.

my friends' rights to live, and my mother's fear."

Brown came down from her office to speak to the more than 100 students from Lakeridge High School in Lake Oswego, who sat on a broad stairway underneath the Capitol rotunda. She urged those who are 18 to register to vote.

"You want what?" she asked them.

"Change," they shouted in unison.

"How do you make change?" Brown asked.

"Vote!" the students shouted. A couple of hours later, Brown met in her office with a dozen

students from different schools. They agreed more needs to be done, including expanded access to mental health counseling to prevent unstable students from reaching the breaking point and committing violence.

But some students said gun control is also needed. "Nationally, I think there needs to be things like assault rifle bans but also closing the gun show loophole ... and making it so background checks aren't time-limited," student Eamon Walsh said as he left the governor's office.

Such a time limit allowed Dylann Roof to buy the gun he's accused of using to kill nine

churchgoers in Charleston, S.C. in 2015, Walsh noted.

The bill that Brown signed Monday closes a loophole in a 2015 law that excluded some abusers from the ban on buying or owning guns and ammunition, such as people who they don't live with the partner they're abusing or threatening, and those under restraining orders.

The measure was introduced before the Feb. 14, Florida shooting, but Brown emphasized the bloodshed as she lobbied the Oregon Legislature for passage and signed the bill.

20-year-old sues over age limit

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — An Oregon man filed suits Monday claiming Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart discriminated against the 20-year-old when they refused to sell him a rifle.

Dick's and Walmart restricted gun sales to adults 21 and older in the wake of the Florida high school massacre. The 19-year-old accused in the school slaying bought the AR-15 used in the attack legally.

Oregon law allows residents to buy shotguns or rifles starting at age 18.

Tyler Watson's lawsuits filed against the retailers in two separate counties claim he faced age discrimination from Dick's and Walmart. The Oregonian/OregonLive reported. The lawsuit is believed to be the first filed over the gun policies enacted on Feb. 28.

The lawsuit claims a store owned by Dick's Sporting Goods in Medford, Ore., refused to sell Watson a .22-caliber Ruger rifle on Feb. 24. The suit says Grants Pass Walmart in Oregon refused to sell him a gun on March 3.

It's not clear if Watson knew at that point of the restrictions.

Watson is asking judges to force Dick's and Walmart "to stop unlawfully discriminating against 18, 19, and 20-year-old customers at all Oregon locations." Additionally, he is asking for unspecified punitive damages.

Walmart spokesman Randy Hargrove said the retailer plans to defend its gun policy. A representative from Dick's has responded to a request for comment.



AMY BETH BENNETT, SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL/AP

U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, center, speaks during a news conference at her office in Sunrise, Fla., on Monday. The congressman organized a roundtable to discuss gun safety. At left is Megan Hobson, a survivor of gun violence six years ago; at right is Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student Mei-Ling Ho-Shing.

Fla. gun bill passes Senate, heads to House

Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — It doesn't include the assault weapon ban that students who survived Florida's deadly school shooting demanded of lawmakers, but the state's Senate narrowly passed a bill that would create new restrictions on rifle sales and allow some teachers to carry guns in schools.

Meanwhile, prosecutors and lawyers for the victims are going to court to handle the aftermath of the Valentine's Day massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in the court system.

Grand jurors are expected to begin hearing evidence on Tuesday against Nikolas Cruz, the 19-year-old former student who authorities say killed 17 people and injured more than a dozen others when he fired an AR-15 assault-style rifle inside the school.

Grievously injured student Anthony Borges, 15, and his fam-

ily filed a letter of intent to sue the Broward Sheriff's Office and school resource officer as well as the school system and Marjory Stoneman Douglas principal to recover the costs of his recovery.

The 20-18 Senate vote Monday evening followed three hours of often emotional debate. Support and opposition crossed party lines, and it was clear many of those who voted for the bill weren't entirely happy with it. The bill now goes to the House, which has a similar bill awaiting consideration by the full chamber.

"Do I think this bill goes far enough? No! No, I don't," said Democratic Sen. Lauren Book, who tearfully described visiting the school after the shooting.

Book also wanted a ban on assault-style rifles, like many of the students who traveled to the state Capitol, who asked lawmakers to do that and more to stop future

mass shootings. But Book said she couldn't let the legislative session end Friday without doing something. "My community was rocked. My schoolchildren were murdered in their classrooms. I cannot live with a choice to put party politics above an opportunity to get something done that inches us closer to the place I believe we should be as a state," she said. "This is the first step in saying never again."

Earlier Monday, families of the 17 people who died called on the state's Legislature to pass a bill they believe will improve school security.

Reading a statement outside Stoneman Douglas High School, Ryan Petty implored legislators to pass Gov. Rick Scott's proposal to add armed security guards, keep guns away from the mentally ill and improve mental health programs for at-risk teens.



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WORLD

Ex-Russian spy collapses in UK

British police seek to determine why he fell ill after exposure to unknown substance

By MARTIN BENEDYK
AND KATE DePUY
Associated Press

SALISBURY, England — British counterterrorism specialists offered expertise to police in southern England on Tuesday as they sought to unravel the mystery of why a former Russian spy fell critically ill following exposure to an "unknown substance."

Authorities maintained a cordon near the spot — a bench near a shopping mall — where former double agent Sergei Skripal and a woman collapsed Sunday in Salisbury, 90 miles southwest of London. British media reported that the woman was Skripal's daughter Yulia.

Britain will respond "appropriately and robustly" if Russia's involvement is established in the case, the U.K. foreign secretary said Tuesday.

Boris Johnson told lawmakers in the House of Commons that he wasn't "pointing fingers" as to who might be responsible for Sergei Skripal's collapse. But he stressed that if state involvement was proven, Britain would take action.

"I say to governments around the world no attempt to take innocent life on U.K. soil will go either unsanctioned or unpunished," he

said.

Johnson said the crisis could affect British participation at the soccer World Cup in Russia this summer. He said that if Russian involvement is proved, "it will be very difficult to imagine that U.K. representation at that event will go ahead in the normal way."

The Foreign Office clarified that the comment referred to dignitaries and officials, not the England team, which is scheduled to compete at the tournament.

Sunday's incident drew parallels to the death of former Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko, who was poisoned with radioactive polonium 11 years ago in London.

"I think we have to remember that Russian exiles are not immortal, they do all die and there can be a tendency for some conspiracy theories," Metropolitan Police assistant commissioner Mark Rowley told the BBC.

"But likewise we have to be alive to the fact of state threats as illustrated by the Litvinenko case."

Skripal, 66, was convicted in Russia on charges of spying for Britain and sentenced in 2006 to 13 years in prison. He was freed in 2010 as part of a spy swap, which followed the exposure of a ring of Russian sleeper agents in the United States.



FRANK AUGSTEIN/AP

A police officer secures the area Tuesday as a police tent covers the spot where former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his companion were found critically ill Sunday following exposure to an "unknown substance" in Salisbury, England.

"[Skripal and the woman] are currently being treated for suspected exposure to an unknown substance. Both are currently in a critical condition in intensive care," police said in a statement.

A small number of emergency services personnel were assessed immediately after the incident, and police said Tuesday that all but one remained in the hospital.

The discovery led to a dramatic decontamination effort. Crews in billowing yellow moon suits worked into the night spraying down the street, and the Salisbury hospital's emergency room was closed. A pub and a restaurant remain "secured," but police did not say how long the cordons would be in place.

A closed circuit television image of a man and woman walking through an alleyway connecting

the Zizzi restaurant and the bench where Skripal and the woman were found is believed to be of interest to police.

"Police had a good look at the footage and were interested in these two people. It was the only image they took away," said Cain Prince, 28, the manager of a nearby gym. "They wanted a list of everyone in the gym between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. as well."

Public records list Skripal as having an address in Salisbury.

Skripal served with Russia's military intelligence, often known by its Russian-language acronym GRU, and retired in 1999. He then worked at the Foreign Ministry until 2003 and later became involved in business.

After his 2004 arrest in Moscow, he confessed to having been

recruited by British intelligence in 1995 and said he provided information about GRU agents in Europe, receiving more than \$100,000 in return.

At the time of Skripal's trial, the Russian media quoted the FSB domestic security agency as saying the damage from his activities could be compared to harm inflicted by Oleg Penkovsky, a GRU colonel who spied for the United States and Britain. Penkovsky was executed in 1963.

The circumstances surrounding Sunday's incident were still murky, and police urged the public not to speculate. But few could avoid invoking the name of Litvinenko — the former Russian agent who died after drinking polonium-210-laced tea in a swanky London hotel in 2006.

Violence precludes return of Rohingya

Associated Press

BANGKOK — The senior U.N. official for human rights said Tuesday that it is impossible to safely send Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh back to Myanmar because widespread and systematic violence appears to be continuing against them in Myanmar, amounting to "ethnic cleansing."

U.N. Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Andrew Gilmour said in a statement that during a four-day visit to Bangladesh, refugees told him "credible accounts of continued killings, rape, torture and abductions, as well as forced starvation" in the western Myanmar state of Rakhine. Myanmar's government denies such abuses and announced in January that it was ready to accept the refugees back.

"Safe, dignified and sustainable



MANISH SWARUP/AP

Muslim Rohingya refugee who were staying in no-man's land at Bandarban between Myanmar and Bangladesh border carry their belongings to new locations at Balukhali refugee camp in January.

returns are of course impossible under current conditions," he said.

Some 700,000 Muslim Rohingyas have fled Buddhist-majority Myanmar to Bangladesh since late August, when Myanmar security forces began sweeps through Rakhine after attacks by a Rohingya insurgent group. There are credible accounts of widespread human rights abuses, including rape, the torching of homes and killings, carried out against the Rohingyas, leading

to accusations that Myanmar is guilty of "ethnic cleansing," or even genocide.

Gilmour said the rate of killings and sexual violence in Rakhine has subsided since August and September last year, but "It appears that widespread and systematic violence against the Rohingya persists."

Myanmar's government spokesman did not answer repeated calls for comment on Gilmour's statement.

Venezuela opens backchannel talks over jailed American

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro welcomed a visit by a top-ranking Republican congressional staffer last month to discuss the possible release of a Utah man jailed for more than 20 months in this volatile South American nation, six U.S. congressional and administration aides told The Associated Press.

It's not known if there has been any progress in the backchannel talks to secure Joshua Holt's freedom, but the mere fact that Maduro met with the staffer, and in turn sent an envoy of his own this week to Washington, may be a sign of movement in a case that has become a major irritant as tensions between the two countries rise.

The unannounced discussions began when Caleb McCarry, a Republican aide on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, traveled to Caracas in February and met with Maduro and first lady Cilia Flores to discuss Holt's imprisonment, said the aides, who agreed to discuss the matter only if not quoted by name because the

talks are sensitive.

They said McCarry, who has known Maduro for more than 15 years, made the unusual visit at the request of Sen. Orrin Hatch, a Republican from Utah. While in Caracas, McCarry visited Holt in jail, delivering him a letter from Hatch.

The Trump administration is said to be aware of McCarry's lobbying, though there is no indication it has lent support to the effort.

The behind-the-scenes dialogue prompted a surprise visit this week to Washington by a trusted ally of Maduro, Gov. Rafael Lavaca of Carabobo state, to discuss Holt, three congressional aides familiar with the visit said.

Holt, 25, traveled to Caracas in June 2016 to marry a fellow Mormon he met online practicing his Spanish. The couple was waiting for her U.S. visa when they were arrested during a police raid on the government-built housing complex where they were living in her apartment. Venezuelan authorities alleged Holt was stockpiling "weapons of war."

WORLD

Taiwan to boost defense budget

By JOHNSON LAI
Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan — Taiwan will look to its domestic arms industry as well as foreign suppliers to respond to China's continuing military buildup, but it has no interest in engaging in an arms race with its cross-strait rival, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

The remarks from spokesman Chen Chung-ji came a day after China announced an 8.1 percent rise in its military budget for this year to \$173 billion, the world's second-largest after the United States.

"Taiwan has no intention of getting involved in an arms race with China or with neighboring countries," Chen told reporters at a briefing. "However, we expect to strengthen our capabilities in self-developing arms, including locally built vessels and aircraft, or even information and communication warfare."

China regards Taiwan as Chinese territory to be eventually brought under its control — by force, if necessary. Under China-imposed diplomatic isolation, Taiwan has few avenues for purchasing arms abroad apart from the United States, which despite having only unofficial ties with the self-governing island democracy is legally bound to ensure it has a credible defense.

Under President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan also has sought to reinvigorate its domestic arms industry, including in building trains, aircraft and possibly ships and submarines. Such foreign and domestic weapons systems are intended to "satisfy the needs of defensive warfare and assure the security of Taiwan, as well as to maintain regional stability and peace," Chen said.

With the world's largest standing military of between 2 million and 2.3 million members, China is preparing to launch its second aircraft carrier while integrating stealth fighters into its air force and fielding an array of advanced missiles able to attack air and sea targets at vast distances.

Taiwan's armed forces are far smaller, although the island has universal conscription and a pool of reserves nearly 3 million strong. Its commander has sought to capitalize on the physical barrier posed by the 100-mile-wide Taiwan Strait to fend off a possible Chinese attack. China's missile arsenal is considered a key component in any assault, able to overwhelm Taiwan's air defenses by sheer force of numbers.



PHOTOS BY ARNULFO FRANCO/AP

A man removes the word Trump from a marquee outside the Trump Ocean Club International Hotel and Tower in Panama City on Monday.

Judge, police help oust Trump hotels from Panama property

Associated Press

PANAMA CITY — Workers fired President Donald Trump's name from signs outside his family company's luxury hotel in Panama on Monday as Trump's executives were ousted from their management offices in a business dispute under orders from Panamanian officials. Trump's security guards also left.

The end to a 12-day standoff over control of the property came early in the day when a Panamanian judicial official and police officers backed the hotel's majority owner, Orestes Fintiklis, as he took possession of the offices. The Trump-affiliated management and security officials then left the 70-story, waterfront high-rise.

"This was purely a commercial dispute that just spun out of control," said Fintiklis, a Miami-based private equity investor and head of the hotel owners' association. "And today, this dispute has been settled by the authorities and the judges of this country."

The Trump Organization's lawyers, however, said Panamanian courts had in fact made no determination on the underlying dispute — a management contract held by the Trump group that it claims is still valid — and had only appointed an interim management until an international arbitration panel rules on the issue.

"Trump Hotels is totally convinced it will not only prevail but that it should also be paid damage-



A group of Panamanian police officers stand guard inside the hotel.

es, costs and other charges related to today's actions," the lawyers said in a statement. The Trump Organization didn't say who the new management was or why the Trump name was removed from the hotel.

The Panamanian Embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A Panamanian judicial official told The Associated Press a statement would come later in the day.

The Trump Hotel's website had ceased offering direct bookings at the hotel by early Monday afternoon. "We apologize," the site said. "There are no available rooms for your requested stay."

The hotel owners tried to fire Trump's company last year, but

the Trump Organization disputed the termination as legally invalid. As part of his fire-sale purchase of 202 of the hotel's 369 units, Fintiklis signed a February 2017 agreement not to challenge Trump's management contract — a deal the Trump Organization considers binding.

Fintiklis quickly changed course after the deal closed in August, arguing that alleged mismanagement by Trump's staff and the deterioration of the Trump brand rendered keeping the property in Trump hands impossible.

In late December, Trump's management team ran off a team of Marriott hotel executives visiting the property at Fintiklis' invitation.

"God is great" in Arabic, and demanded to enter the cockpit.

He was wrestled down by the flight's two air marshals and crewmembers. The flight's chief cabin steward was slightly injured in the head during the scuffle, the officials said.

Egyptian authorities questioned the crew and other passengers about the incident after they arrived back in Cairo.

Amid violence, Sri Lanka declares state of emergency

By KRISHNAN FRANCIS
Associated Press

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka's president declared a state of emergency Tuesday amid fears that anti-Muslim attacks in several central hill towns could spread.

Details of the emergency decree were not immediately announced, and it was unclear how it would affect life on the South Asian island nation, where Buddhist-Muslim tensions have flared in recent years with the growth of extremist Buddhist organizations.

Life went on as normal Tuesday afternoon in the capital, Colombo, and in many other towns and cities, with no signs of increased security.

The areas where the violence erupted Monday, outside the town of Kandy, remained under curfew Tuesday, with soldiers and police patrolling the streets and no one allowed outside except for emergencies.

A tweet from the office of President Maithripala Sirisena said the decree would "redress the unsatisfactory security situation prevailing in certain parts of the country." It said the country's security forces "have been suitably empowered to deal with criminal elements in the society and urgently restore normalcy."

While government officials did not specifically mention Buddhist extremists, many comments appeared aimed at them.

The government will "act sternly against groups that are inciting religious hatred," Cabinet Minister Rauff Hakeem said after a meeting with the president.

The recent announcement came after Buddhist mobs swept through the towns outside Kandy, burning at least 11 Muslim-owned shops and homes. The attacks followed reports that a Buddhist man had been killed by a group of Muslims. Police fired tear gas into the crowds and later announced a curfew in the town.

Lakshman Kiriella, a lawmaker from Kandy, said in Parliament that the attacks were "carried out by outsiders."

"I am ashamed as a Buddhist, and we must apologize to the Muslims," he declared.

So far, no violence has been reported in other parts of the island nation.

Sri Lanka has long been divided between the majority Sinhalese, who are overwhelmingly Buddhist, and minority Tamils, who are Hindu, Muslim and Christian. The country remains deeply scarred by its 1983-2009 civil war, when Tamil rebels fought to create an independent homeland.

While the rebels were eventually crushed, a religious divide has taken hold in recent years, with hard-line Sinhalese groups accusing Muslims of forcing people to convert and destroying sacred Buddhist sites.

EgyptAir passenger assaults crewmembers

Associated Press

CAIRO — A passenger on an EgyptAir flight from the Gulf state of Oman to Cairo assaulted crewmembers Tuesday but was quickly overpowered and handed over to authorities, Egyptian aviation officials said.

The Boeing 737-800 with 78 passengers returned to Muscat, Oman's capital, 30 minutes after it took off from there, and the

crew handed over the passenger to the police.

The plane later left for Cairo, arriving four hours behind schedule.

According to the officials, the passenger, identified as Egyptian national Mohammed Attiya Ashour, was not armed.

The incident unfolded shortly after takeoff, when the man began to shout "Allahu akbar," or

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Off-duty troopers save 6 from apartment fire

NV LAS VEGAS — Six Las Vegas residents, including two married Nevada Highway Troopers who rushed to save them after a fire broke out at their apartment complex.

Trooper Jason Buratzuk said Joseph and Trissa DellaBalla were off work when they noticed the fire as they drove by the Cornerstone Crossing apartment complex on Sunday.

Buratzuk said the couple pulled the fire alarms, but instead of waiting for help to arrive they rushed in the building to help residents.

Joseph DellaBalla alerted residents and helped a family of three and their pets evacuate from the building. Meanwhile, Trissa DellaBalla gathered multiple fire extinguishers and alerted residents who lived behind the engulfed building.

Teen on horse denied service at drive-thru

AZ ANTHEM — An Arizona teen said she was denied service at a Starbucks drive-thru after she tried to order a Frappuccino while on a horse.

KNXV-TV in Phoenix reported a Starbucks in Anthem, Ariz., recently told Aspen Cline it wouldn't serve her when she and her horse, Scout, galloped to the drive-thru.

Cline said the barista didn't give a reason and only said the store couldn't take her order. The teen said she also had planned to give her horse some cream.

Starbucks told the station that drive-thru windows were only for cars out of safety reasons. However, there are a number of videos online of horse riders ordering lattes at Starbucks drive-thru windows.

Chuck E. Cheese brawl ends with 2 arrests

NJ DEPTFORD — Authorities said a large brawl that spilled out of a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant in New Jersey left two people injured, including an employee who tried to break up the fight.

Deptford police arrived at the restaurant Sunday night to find a fight involving as many as 20 people. It's unclear what sparked the massive brawl at the family restaurant chain.

A woman had a minor stab wound to the hip but declined medical treatment. The employee had a cut on his left hand.

Two women from Philadelphia were taken into custody. Authorities said Tracy Jones, 47, faces aggravated assault charges, while Stephanie Levensong, 24, is charged with disorderly conduct and resisting arrest.

Town battles growing stinky skunk crisis

NM HAGERMAN — Something stinks in one southeastern New Mexico town and residents want police on the case.

KRQE-TV in Albuquerque reported a stinky skunk smell is plaguing the town of Hagerman thanks to

THE CENSUS

4,700

recordings by artists such as the Carter Family, Bill Monroe and Jimmie Rodgers.

The approximate number of vinyl LPs and 78 rpm records donated to East Tennessee State University by a Tennessee museum. The donation was given to the Bluegrass, Old Time and Country Music Studies program in the university's Department of Appalachian Studies by the Appalachian Cultural Music Association and its Mountain Music Museum in Kingsport. Museum Executive Director Rick Dollar said the collection was given to the museum several years ago but it doesn't have space for them all. It includes



ROBERT F. BUKATY/AP

Chilly lunch break

Tom McDonald, of South Portland, Maine, pours hot water into a backpacker's meal during a lunch break along the east branch of the Penobscot River in the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument in Northern Maine on Sunday.

a mild winter that is bringing out the smelly mammals early.

Viola Badcock, the owner of Hagerman Township Animal Shelter, said the annoying animals are hanging around town and generally are not healthy.

Hagerman Police Patrolman Adam Chavez said officers are settling up traps around town, and healthy skunks caught in traps will be relocated on the east side of town near a river.

1906 film of city after quake found at flea sale

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A newspaper said a long-lost film reel with nine minutes of footage capturing San Francisco two weeks after the deadly 1906 earthquake surfaced at a flea market in the city.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported Saturday that the rare find portrays the city's post-quake devastation, including City Hall with its dome nearly destroyed.

The so-called "great quake" and ensuing fire on April 18, 1906, killed thousands.

The newspaper said the nitrate film reel was shot by early filmmakers the Miles Brothers. The public will be able to view the film April 14 at the Niles Essanay Silent Film Museum in Fremont.

Boat parade rescheduled due to too much water

TX GLADEWATER — A boat parade planned for this past weekend in Glade-water in East Texas had to be rescheduled because there was too much water.

Heavy rains led to flooding along the Sabine River, where a Mardi Gras boat parade regatta was planned for Saturday.

Organizers told Tyler television station KLTU the event has been reset for later this month.

Girl dies after mirror falls on her in shoe shop

GA RIVERDALE — Pay-less Shoes is offering condolences to the family of a 2-year-old girl who died after a mirror inside one of its suburban

Atlanta stores fell on top of her.

Riverdale police Lt. Nicole Rabel told news outlets that Ifrah Siddique was found severely injured Friday night.

The discount footwear company said in a statement that it is devastated and that the company is working with authorities to understand the "nature of this accident."

Art buff says he found old Raphael print

VA MINERAL — An art history buff believes he's identified a centuries-old print of a famous painting in a small Virginia church.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported Saturday that the print is at Gilboa Christian Church in Mineral, Va. The mid-19th-century building is about an hour from Richmond.

Federico Colagrande believes the print is of Raphael's "Madonna di San Sisto." The 16th-century painting depicts the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus.

The original painting was sold

to a ruler in Saxony in 1754. Friedrich Muller made prints from the original. Only a handful of those prints exist today.

Beach cleared after toy grenade is found

NJ SEASIDE PARK — Police in New Jersey said a toy hand grenade sparked a flood of emergency agencies responding to a Jersey shore beach.

Seaside Park Police spokesman Cpl. Steve Shadiack said police received a call about what appeared to be a grenade Sunday afternoon at a local beach. NJ.com reported officers immediately evacuated the area.

Multiple agencies were called to the scene, including the prosecutor's office's arson unit, the Ocean County Sheriff's Department's K-9 unit and the New Jersey State Police bomb squad.

Shadiack said the device was revealed to be a toy upon closer inspection, and it was taken by police for destruction.

From wire reports

FACES



The CW Network
Lucy Hale is Stella on "Life Sentence."
 The new TV series premieres
 Friday on AFN-Pulse.

Good 'Life'

It took a special story to get
 Lucy Hale back to work on TV

By RICK BENTLEY
 Tribune News Service

Lucy Hale was ready for a break. She had just spent seven seasons on the hugely popular "Pretty Little Liars." The last thing she was thinking about was doing another TV series.

Then she got the script for "Life Sentence."

"I thought it was a really important story to tell," Hale says. "I wanted to be the girl who told that story. It came as a surprise to me that I signed on to do something so quickly but with me, if something resonates then I have to go do it. It's not every day that you read something you fall in love with."

"I have never been more proud of anything in my life. This series reminded me of what I love to do."

The story that pulled Hale back to work so quickly has her playing Stella, a young woman who has spent the last eight years living each day as if it could be her last because of a battle with cancer. She traveled the world, faced her darkest fears and found true love on a whirlwind trip to Paris. But the story doesn't end there.

Stella's cancer has been cured, and now she must face the long-term consequences of the decisions she made, including marrying a total stranger. At the same time, she leans on those around her who have been living their own lives just to keep Stella from knowing the truth.

"All these things were hidden from Stella. She did live in a fantasy world. Her family tried to give her the best last years of her life. So you later find out that her family's about as dysfunctional as they come," Hale says. "Tonally, the show is very heavy. Cancer is very heavy, but it's more about taking those moments to laugh at yourself."

Hale was excited about starring in the series, but at the same time knew there would be some pushback just because it deals with cancer. That's a subject that hits home to a large part of the population. Many of those questions are being handled by the executive producers, which includes Bill Lawrence. He says the thing that is interesting to him in television is taking chances. "I can't tell you how many people I sat in front of when I handed 'Scrubs' in that said the amount of comedy and silliness you're doing with these people living and dying is not going to work. And I believe this is where you take chances," Lawrence says. "I believe tonally for the show."

"Right now all the beginning questions are about cancer and I would tell you that after the opening show, we are really poaching ourselves to say we're trying to do an optimistic family show that has real-life ramifications for the family members that went through an ordeal like this, which we find to be a universal theme."

Because "Life Sentence" picks up with the cancer out of her life, the background work Hale needed to do was more about how dealing with cancer affected family and friends. Hale has not been personally affected by cancer. The Memphis native often visited St. Jude Hospital and has been to Children's Hospital of Los Angeles to observe patients. She was impressed and moved by how people facing one of the worst possible scenarios could be so positive. It's that perspective on life that is at the core of the series.

The series is the latest to use the popular theme of young people battling with cancer while dealing with life. Hale's theory as to why that has become such a big theme with young people is everyone wants to love their loves as if they were dying.

"But, at the same time we all live with fear. Fear of what people will think. Fear of not enough money. Fear of getting fired," Hale says. "But Stella says 'Eff that. I'm going to do whatever I want for whatever time I have left.' I think that resonates with everyone."

Hale says she's a Type-A person where everything in her life had to be tightly scheduled. Playing Stella has opened her eyes to living more freely. As proof she's really opened up her life, Hale went skydiving for the first time.

The Type-A personality she's trying to soften didn't come along until after she started her acting career as a teenager. "When people ask me how I got into acting, I always loved performing but I never really knew what I was going to do. I eventually knew this is what I wanted, but I had no backup plan," Hale says. "I have been lucky enough to have been able to keep working but I am still trying to figure out who Lucy is as a person outside of what I do in the industry."

"This show has been good for me in that way."

Man arrested, accused of stealing Frances McDormand's Oscar trophy

From wire reports

A man was arrested and is accused of stealing Frances McDormand's Oscars trophy after the Academy Awards on Sunday night, Los Angeles police said.

Terry Bryant, 47, was arrested on suspicion of felony grand theft, said Officer Rosario Herrera, a police spokeswoman.

Video captured by The Associated Press appears to show Bryant walking with the statuette out of the Governors Ball, the Oscars after-party where police say he took it. The video shows a man in a tuxedo who appears to be Bryant holding an Oscar statuette highly and proudly as an onlooker cheers.

Another photographer who took Bryant's picture at about the same time did not recognize him as a winner at the ceremony, and began following him, police said. When

he was confronted, Bryant handed back the statuette without a fight, police said. He was detained by security guards at the event and arrested by Los Angeles police officers. The award was later returned to McDormand.

"After some brief time apart, Frances and her Oscar were happily reunited. They celebrated the reunion with a double cheeseburger from In-N-Out Burger," McDormand's publicist, Simon Halls, told the AP.

In other Oscars news, television viewers could barely stifle a yawn for Hollywood's biggest night, with the Academy Awards plunging to a record-low viewership of 26.5 million people.

The Nielsen company said that's a 20 percent drop from the 33 million who watched the 2017 show, which was also hosted by Jimmy Kimmel. Oscar viewer-

ship is often tied to the box office muscle of the big nominees, and best picture winner "The Shape of Water," only grossed \$574 million in the U.S.

It's the first time the Oscars have drawn fewer than 30 million people, in Nielsen records that go back to 1974.

Sorkin recalls story about 'A Few Good Men'

Writer Aaron Sorkin obviously knew Demi Moore was good for more than just sex in a movie. He also knew women in general (surprise!) could be quite useful in sans-sex cinema.

A male studio executive working on 1992's "A Few Good Men," however, was not as clear on that concept.

Welcome to the early '90s, when Sorkin

was adapting his play for the big-screen version that starred Moore and Tom Cruise. "The whole idea of the movie was that these ... young lawyers were in way over their head and two Marines were on trial for their lives, so if Tom Cruise and Demi Moore take time out to roll in the hay, I just didn't think we would like them as much for doing that," the writer told the New York Daily News on Monday.

The exec, however, wanted that Moore-Cruise love scene "badly," and he didn't get why it wasn't in there. It wasn't the only thing he didn't understand. "I'll never forget what the executive wrote back, which was, 'Well, if Tom and Demi aren't going to sleep together, why is Demi a woman?'" and that completely stumped me," Sorkin said. Sorkin held on with mo. And Moore clearly kept the role.

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Walmart adds prepared meals to stores

By MATTHEW BOYLE

Bloomberg

Walmart Inc. will start offering prepared meals at its stores for the first time, a move that could help the nation's biggest grocer sell more food while siphoning customers from restaurant chains.

Ten different meals are now available in 250 stores, and the program will expand to 2,000 locations by year's end, Walmart executives said in an interview. The company also is introducing four \$15 meal-kit options in stores, expanding a business that had previously been offered only online through outside vendors.

"More than 80 percent of Americans don't know what they will have for dinner tonight," said Tyler Lehr, a Walmart senior vice

'More than 80 percent of Americans don't know what they will have for dinner tonight.'

Tyler Lehr

Walmart senior vice president

president. Scrambling to find a meal "puts pressure on a family," he said.

The move is the latest step to improve Walmart's grocery business, the chain's biggest source of revenue. It has upgraded its beef to certified Angus, cultivated a sweeter variety of cantaloupe that can be sold year-round and recently developed a better way to track the freshness of fruits and vegetables as they travel from farms to its shelves.

The company also is looking to ward off competitors on multiple fronts, including Amazon.com, German discount Aldi and meal-kit purveyor Blue Apron Holdings.

Prices of the prepared meals will range from \$8 to \$10, and varieties include pot roast with mashed potatoes and chicken enchiladas. Given the massive scope of Walmart's grocery business, the meals could depress sales at restaurant chains if shoppers may

choose to grab a quick and cheap dinner from Walmart.

It's not good timing for the dining industry. Sales growth at the nation's top 500 restaurants has slowed for two straight years, according to research firm Technomic, while growth at full-service chains like Olive Garden and Chili's went from 4.7 percent in 2015 to flat last year.

For Walmart, the meal push also may let it get more out of its deli section. Nearly all supermarket chains have such departments, yet only 12 percent of shoppers regularly visit that part of the store, according to data tracker Nielsen. Higher-income households are 20 percent more likely to purchase deli items, Nielsen and the Food Marketing Institute found.

It's increasingly common practice for supermarkets to offer prepared meals, but Walmart held off until it could find the right approach, Lehr said.

The meals, which were developed internally in about two months at the company's culinary innovation center, have a shelf life of three days.

"It's no big secret that they are offered in other retailers, and we have looked at them previously. But we were not thrilled with quality levels," Lehr said.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (March 7)	\$1.2728
Dollar buys (March 7)	69.7857
British pound (March 7)	\$1.43
Japanese yen (March 7)	103.00
South Korean won (March 7)	1,049.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.3899
Canada (Dollar)	1.2904
China (Yuan)	6.3277
Denmark (Krone)	6.0096
Egypt (Pound)	17.6227
Euro	\$1.2396/0.8067
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8330
Hungary (Forint)	352.53
Israel (Shekel)	3.4647
Japan (Yen)	106.06
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2999
Norway (Krone)	7.7791
Philippines (Peso)	51.88
Poland (Zloty)	3.37
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7507
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3162
South Korea (Won)	1,063.49
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9392
Thailand (Baht)	31.33
Turkey (Lira)	3.7931
Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance. For Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, nonmilitary currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	4.50
Discount rate	2.00
Federated funds market rate	1.42
3-month bill	1.66
30-year bond	3.15

Employment drug tests likely to slow amid pot legalization

By REBECCA GREENFIELD

AND JENNIFER KAPLAN

Bloomberg

Employers are struggling to hire workers in a tightening U.S. job market. Marijuana is now legal in nine states and the District of Columbia, meaning more than in five American adults can eat, drink, smoke or vape as they please. The result is the slow decline of pre-employment drug tests, which for decades had been a requirement for new recruits in industries ranging from manufacturing to finance.

As of the beginning of 2018, Excellence Health Inc., a Las Vegas-based health care company with about 6,000 employees, no longer drug tests people coming to work for the pharmaceutical side of the

business. The company stopped testing for marijuana two years ago.

"We don't care what people do in their free time," said Liam Meyer, a company spokesperson. "We want to help these people, instead of saying, 'Hey, you can't work for us because you used a substance,'" he added. The company also added a hotline for any workers who might be struggling with drug use.

Last month, AutoNation Inc., the largest U.S. auto dealer, announced it would no longer refuse job applicants who tested positive for weed. The Denver Post, owned by Digital First Media, ended pre-employment drug testing for all nonsafety-sensitive positions in September 2016.

So far, companies in states

that have legalized either recreational or medicinal marijuana are leading the way on dropping drug tests. A survey last year by the Mountain States Employers Council of 609 Colorado employers found that the share of companies testing for marijuana use fell to 66 percent, down from 77 percent the year before.

Drug testing restricts the job pool, and in the current tight labor market, that's having an impact on productivity and growth. In surveys done by the Federal Reserve last year, employers cited an inability by applicants to pass drug tests among the reasons for difficulties in hiring. Failed tests reached an all-time high in 2017, according to data from Quest Diagnostics Inc. That's likely to get worse as more people partake in

state-legalized cannabis.

"The benefits of at least reconsidering the drug policy on behalf of an employer would be pretty high," said Jeremy Kidd, a professor at Mercer Law School who wrote a paper on the economics of workplace drug testing.

MARKET WATCH

March 5, 2018

Dow Jones Industrials	336.70
	24,874.76
Nasdaq composite	72.84
	7,330.70
Standard & Poor's 500	29.69
	2,720.94
Russell 2000	12.88
	1,546.05

WEATHER OUTLOOK

WEDNESDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



WEDNESDAY IN EUROPE



THURSDAY IN THE PACIFIC



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

Stripes

SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



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Transportation

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Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Lt. Col. Michael C. Bailey, Europe commander
Lt. Col. Richard McClintic, Pacific commander
Harry Eley, Europe Business Operations

EDITORIAL

Terry Leonard, Editor
leonard.terry@stripes.com
Robert H. Reid, Senior Managing Editor
reid.robert@stripes.com
Tina Croley, Managing Editor for Content
croley.tina@stripes.com
Sean Moores, Managing Editor for Presentation
moores.sean@stripes.com

Joe Gromelski, Managing Editor for Digital
gromelski.joe@stripes.com

BUREAU STAFF

Europe/Mideast

Erk Slavin, Europe & Mideast Bureau Chief
slavin.erk@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9350, DSN (314)583.9350

Pacific

Aaron Kidd, Pacific Bureau Chief
kidd.aaron@stripes.com
+81.42.552.2511 ext. 88380, DSN (315)227.7380

Washington

Joseph Caccioli, Washington Bureau Chief
caccioli.joseph@stripes.com
+1(202)761.0908, DSN (312)763.0908
Brian Bowers, Assistant Managing Editor, News
bowers.brian@stripes.com

CIRCULATION

Mideast
Robert Reismann, reismann.robert@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9150, DSN (314)583.9150

Europe

Van Rowell, rowell.van@stripes.com
+49(0)631.3615.9111, DSN (314)583.9111

Pacific

Mal Mori, customerhelp@stripes.com
+81.3.6385.3711, DSN (315)229.3171

CONTACT US

Washington

tel. (+1202) 761.0900; DSN (312)763.0900;
529 14th Street NW, Suite 350, Washington, DC
20045-1301

Reader letters

letters@stripes.com

Additional contacts

stripes.com/contacts

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Tobias Naegle

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OPINION

Don't turn purchases into statements

By MEGAN MCARDLE

The Washington Post

Remember when companies tried to stay out of politics? I'd imagine Delta Air Lines is recalling those days very fondly. The airline bowed to pressure from liberal activists to stop discussing a grow discount to the National Rifle Association's annual convention. Now it's facing a backlash from Georgia Republicans. Given that Delta's headquarters and biggest hub are in Atlanta, that's a big problem.

Delta is wanly protesting that it wasn't trying to make a political statement but to stay out of politics altogether. But it ended the discount in response to a political pressure campaign. And the company made a point of announcing its decision on Twitter, rather than quietly informing the NRA. If anyone at Delta thought that this wouldn't be taken as a swipe at the NRA, that person really needs to make some sort of meet a few human beings while visiting our planet.

Indeed, that was the point. NRA finances aren't going to be devastated because members no longer get a small discount to attend its convention. Nor will NRA members stop supporting gun rights because Delta declares them unworthy of a cut-rate fare. They're more likely to look for another airline.

The true aim of this exercise is stigma, not economic warfare. I suspect that Delta understood this and simply miscalculated the risk of backlash.

Or perhaps it realized it no longer had the option of staying out of politics. FedEx, after all, refused to drop the NRA from

its discount program in the face of similar pressure, declaring that the firm "has never set or changed rates for any of our millions of customers around the world in response to their politics, beliefs or positions on issues." Now there are calls to boycott FedEx.

Why are we so eager to enlist companies in political battles? Ever since the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision struck down key parts of the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance legislation, progressives have been angrily deriding conservatives for supposedly believing that "corporations are people." But if public corporations are not people, why should they have political opinions? Well, because politics, and identity, have already leached into our business relations, as retail markets have segmented into ever more rarefied niches. Fifty years ago, almost everyone — from the working class to the affluent — bought basically the same kinds of goods at the same few stores. Now we have our demographic niches, increasingly, our politics. Liberals can eat at Starbucks and Panera Bread while conservatives dine on Papa John's and Chick-fil-A; crafters can split between Hobby Lobby and Michaels, and you can clothe yourself with blue-state American Apparel or red-state Rue 21.

Even mail-order spices have become political, after Bill Penzey of Penzeys Spices decided to make some rather angry remarks about Trump voters. Rival firm The Spice House (amusingly, co-owned by Penzey's sister, Patty Reid), capitalized on the backlash by emphasizing that it, for one, would be staying out of politics. But as with Delta, this wasn't exactly perceived as political, and so now we, as a country,

have both a conservative and a liberal option for bulk cinnamon.

That's all very well for relatively small market niches. But companies in industries that benefit greatly from economies of scale (such as shipping or airlines) can't stay in business by catering to a small, fanatically partisan fan base. They need to appeal as broadly as possible. Publicly slighting millions of NRA members, and the many more millions who feel some tribal kinship with them, is unlikely to be good for any such business.

Nor is it likely to be good for the country. For what happens to an increasingly demographically sorted America when we no longer share even our basic commercial culture? If we can't even fly on the same airlines or drive the same rental cars, why should New York bankers and Silicon Valley engineers pay taxes that disproportionately flow to rural red states? Why should the sons and daughters of those rural areas disproportionately staff the military that they don't share? And how does that completely separate peoples to jointly decide on the running of one vast country?

I don't, of course, mean to suggest that a single boycott will lead to the dissolution of the Republic. The danger lies in the totalizing impulse to make every purchase a statement, no matter how small, and the same greater political implication. If we decide to make every single thing in our lives political, we risk becoming so estranged that we can no longer resolve our disputes through politics.

Megan McArdle, a Washington Post opinions columnist, is a former columnist for Bloomberg View and author of "The Up Side of Down: Why Failing Well Is the Key to Success."

A radical way to rein in occupational licensing

By TYLER COWEN

Bloomberg View

Criticism of the proliferation of occupational licensing is now bipartisan. Occupations such as dog walkers, interior designers, auctioneers and barbers do not need state licenses, and those legal restrictions serve mainly to raise prices for consumers and restrict supply, eventually limiting innovation and job creation, too.

But how to go forward? There are thousands of licenses, covering almost a third of U.S. workers, and licenses are proliferating at the city and county levels, too. Constitutional and antitrust and legal challenges to this trend are beneficial, but they bring only piecemeal victories and cannot undo the current morass of restrictions.

Unlike a court, I don't expect the New York's licenses for dog-walking, but in the meantime Seattle and other municipalities might license dog walkers. The machinery for creating new licenses is much better organized and funded than the institutions for getting rid of them, and once in place these requirements have natural defenders, namely those who have invested in the credentials.

My radical proposal is therefore for the federal government to pre-empt as much occupational licensing as is possible. That's right, these functions would be taken away from the state and local governments.

Unfetter a court, I don't expect the federal bureaucracy to usher in the reign of Milton Friedman's Chicago School economics. But the federal regulatory process would likely pay less heed to local special interests, and it would produce a more homogenized and less idiosyncratic body of regulatory law more geared toward the most important issues, such as medicine and child care. The federal government is less likely than

many state and local governments to obess over licensing rules for fortune tellers, florists and athletic trainers.

A federal approach to these regulations would also bring standardization and uniformity across states, making it easier to move from one part of the country to another, and helping restore the great American tradition of mobility. As it stands now, imagine yours is a military family and you are transferred every few years or so, and your spouse works in a profession that would require relicensing. What justification is there to be for such a hardship and inconvenience?

In short, the federalization of licensing would lower prices for consumers, create more jobs and bring a net increase in economic liberty.

To be clear, I would prefer it if the state and local governments dismantled their occupational licensing on their own. But that does not seem to be in the cards. And these days we have a deregulation-leaning federal government, and a fair amount of willingness to think outside the box, so let's put that to good use. National pre-emption could clear away state and local barriers to some significant parts of it, in one fell swoop.

Federalizing occupational licensing would be legally tricky. For instance, the 1889 Supreme Court case *Dent v. West Virginia* established the right of the states to require medical licenses. So under one view, we might need this and other court decisions to be moved, perhaps on the grounds that much licensing legislation exists to restrict competition and perhaps violates principles of equal protection and non-discrimination. Still, we do now have a Supreme Court that places some value on economic liberty.

Possible congressional action could be taken too. For instance, the National Labor

Relations Act of 1935 pre-empted the ability of the states to regulate labor unions, and Congress could pass something analogous to establish control over many parts of occupational licensing. If need be, Congress could keep regulatory authority with the states in areas where differences in local conditions matter for determining the best laws. But is there really a sound reason why one city or state should license makeup artists and massage therapists but another should not?

Defenders of American federalism may be loath to take such steps, and I share some of their concerns, based on a fear of centralized power. But are state and local governments, in this capacity, truly representing the interests of the governed or are their actions reflecting valuable local information? Are competitive pressures really checking their ability to enact wealth-destroying policies? Or rather have political technologies evolved in such a way that those governments are being systematically captured by special-interest groups for the purposes of income protection?

If my idea sounds too ambitious, a smaller first step would be to compete the licensing would state governments pre-empt requirements at the city level, as Tennessee did last year. That doesn't raise major constitutional issues, and it limits the possibility that cities become a patchwork of mobility-limiting interventions.

Keep in mind that the alternative to my smaller first step would be to let a regime where occupational licensing becomes progressively worse at multiple levels of government. The defense of liberty requires changes, and sometimes that means recognizing that small, local governments are infringing upon our rights rather than protecting them.

Bloomberg View columnist Tyler Cowen is a professor of economics at George Mason University.

OPINION

Frustration with a Trump action could fade

By KATHLEEN PARKER

Washington Post Writers Group

Lear word: Please pay no attention to the man behind the golden drapes.

He doesn't mean it.

"What?" you say. "Doesn't mean what?" Anything. Donald Trump doesn't mean anything he says. At least not for long, so try not to react. Relax. Breathe. Wait.

Contra Trump, nothing worth doing is easy, including ignoring the president of the United States. But ignore him, you must, lest he interpret your reaction as a challenge, which he'd of course aim to win at all costs—even if winning is losing. Give levered heads and reality checkers time to change his mind, which, in fact, is easy.

Consider what's happened recently on the domestic front. In the wake of another school shooting, Trump said it was time to take action on gun reform, including raising the age of purchase to 21. He may truly have believed that reforming or strengthening gun laws was the right thing to do... until he didn't.

Don't worry, he's not embarrassed. We all know why he seems to have changed his mind—politics, the disarming charms of the National Rifle Association, short attention span and so on. But the "why" doesn't really matter. It's always something, as we like to say in America.

Ditto DACA: the Deferred Action (I'll say) for Childhood Arrivals program, as well as countless campaign promises. He clearly has had an influence on the economy, at least for market watchers, until along came the promised Tariff War.

The president himself spoke of a "war" as he defended plans to raise tariffs on



EVAN VUCCI/AP

President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting with the members of the National Governors' Association at the White House last month.

steel and aluminum imports. Never mind that the top four steel exporters to the U.S. are our neighbors (Canada at No. 1; and Mexico, No. 4) and allies Brazil and South Korea. Russia is fifth, with China 11th.

The top aluminum exporters to the U.S. are, again, Canada in first place, followed by Russia, the United Arab Emirates and China. Given the double hit against Canada, perhaps things between Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau aren't so swell after all? Or, just maybe, there's no reasoning whatsoever to any of this.

Soon after Trump announced his plan, now adjusted to he'll let us know next week, the Dow Jones plummeted more

than 400 points, which it seems to do every time Trump opens his mouth lately. Friend and foe must be unamused and/or confused by this sudden punitive move, but they shouldn't be.

A tip to the worried: Think of Trump as weather—which, by the way, became nearly biblical in the nation's capital toward the end of a chaotic week. The U.S. government and surrounding schools shut down Friday because of hurricane-strength winds that, coincidentally, kicked up the same day that Billy Graham's casket departed the U.S. Capitol. This strange phenomenon may not have been the wrath of God, specifically, but you can't prove it wasn't. Personally, I'm leaning toward the

wrath of Melania.

As weather changes, so will Trump's mind. Something will come along to capture his imagination, perhaps the insistent buzz of a wind-swept fly, whereupon the president will seize upon a new course of action, perhaps, say, a retreat on tariffs.

In the meantime, keep an eye on the first family.

Trump is nearly alone now. The White House has been hemorrhaging staff the past few months, with last week's departures, perhaps, the toughest. Trump's "other daughter," and confidante Hope Hicks turned in her resignation as White House communications director just one day after testifying before the House Intelligence Committee regarding possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Vladimir Putin's operatives. Officially, the timing was purely coincidental—next Oz will be your second turn on the fair right.

In another blow, son-in-law Jared Kushner lost his temporary classified status in the White House, thanks to business deals and loans he procured while acting in an official capacity. This effectively renders the erstwhile Middle East peace negotiator no more powerful than a reasonably reliable gossip. Shamed and embarrassed, how much longer will he and, more important, his wife and first daughter Ivanka stick around?

Plainly, tariffs had to be raised. At least until these dizzying winds subside, or someone reminds Trump that though 140,000 Americans hold jobs in the steel industry, largely in midstream-river Pennsylvania, another 6.5 million are employed by steel-using industries.

Relax. Breathe. Wait.

Yours truly,

An American observer.

The night an Army vet battled his emotions as a ref

By JOHN FEINSTEIN

The Washington Post

Often, when athletes or coaches take the field or the court after losing a loved one, they are lauded for their courage. Referees are rarely lauded for anything. They understand.

"No one comes to a game to watch you," Jeff Janosik said.

Two weeks ago, on a blustery, snowy night, Janosik was in the officials' locker room about an hour before Lehigh hosted Army in a Patriot League men's basketball game.

He knew he was facing a long drive home from Bethlehem, Pa., to Pittsburgh because the snow was falling steadily outside the arena. What was initially a five-hour drive would undoubtedly take a good deal longer.

Still, there wasn't any doubt he was going to make the trip. His mother, Anna Marie, had gone into the hospital that day outside Uniontown and he wanted to get home to see her early the next morning.

"It was the flu," he said. "I wasn't supposed to be a big deal. But she was 93, so they were being careful."

Janosik had just checked the snow. It was still coming down hard. His phone rang and he saw the call was from his sister-in-law, Barb.

"She doesn't call me very often, so right away I wondered what was up," he said. "She was kind of half-crying when I answered. She said, 'Jeff, your mom passed away.'"

Janosik paused. "She was 93, she lived an amazing life. But at that moment, I just lost it."

Janosik's first instinct was to get in the car and drive home to see his mother. But he couldn't do that. Tipoff was less than an hour away, and in the middle of a snowstorm there was no way to get a third official to the arena. He decided to find a way to get through the game.

"It was lucky," he said. "I was with [officials] Alvin Cox and Billy Brooks. Alvin's probably my closest friend in officiating. I was supposed to be the crew chief on the game. I asked Alvin if he could take the lead. We checked with Reggie Greenwood [who supervises officials for the Patriot and Ivy Leagues] and he understood completely. Under any circumstances, the two guys you're working with are your two best friends in the world for the two hours you're on the court. It was never more true than that night."

The game turned out to be one-sided. Lehigh took control late in the first half and pulled away for an easy 84-53 win. "Nothing against Army," Janosik said. "Heck, I was in the Army. But I was glad we didn't have a tough game. As it was, I was struggling just to get through it."

"I think I'm a pretty tough guy. I was active duty in the Army for 24 years. I flew helicopters. I've been through some difficult things. But not like that night. At 93, you can't be shocked, I suppose. But I was shocked. It knocked me backwards."

No one in the small crowd had any idea that Janosik was hurting emotionally. Neither did the coaches.

"We all have the same issues as everyone else but you can't let any of them affect your work," Janosik said. "You can't be distracted. If anything, that night, I used my work to distract me from thinking about my mom. It wasn't easy, but it helped."

Janosik first started officiating as a teenager, when he was stationed at Fort Richardson, in Anchorage, Alaska, after finishing flight school.

He was watching an intramural flag football game and joining in with a senior officer who was giving the referee, another officer he was apparently friends with, a hard time. When the game ended, the referee came over to the two men, pointed a finger at Janosik and said, "You think you can referee? You think it's easy? Why don't you try it?"

"Fine," Janosik said. "I will."

"Good," the officer replied. "I'll see you Friday night. We're having a pre-season meeting for all the local basketball officials."

"Basketball?" Janosik said. "I don't know anything about basketball."

By 2013, Janosik was working for a number of leagues and was chosen to work the Atlantic 10 tournament in Brooklyn. At 51, he thought he was finally hitting the big time. He worked the opening game of the tournament between Richmond and Charlotte.

"Never thought I'd end up on 'SportsCenter' for three straight days," he said, recalling that afternoon in Barclays Center.

Richmond led 63-60 with 47 seconds left. Charlotte won the game 68-63 after a bizarre sequence that began with the Spiders intentionally fouling to prevent a 3-point shot and ended with three technical fouls called on Richmond, one on Derrick Williams for a dead-ball elbow to Willie Clayton of Charlotte; two on Richmond coach Chris Mooney for coming onto the court to argue after his team was called for a shooting foul—down one after four made free throws—when he thought it

should have been a one-and-one.

"Before it was over, Charlotte shot 11 free throws [making eight] and my career in the Atlantic 10 was over," Janosik said.

"Everyone said I did everything right by rule, but the people running the league didn't see it that way. I was never asked back."

"Until I had to give mom's eulogy, that was the toughest thing I'd ever dealt with. But I haven't quit and I've still got the whistle and the lanyard."

Then the game at Lehigh ended. Janosik headed to the locker room, unnoticed, which is exactly the way an official wants it. As he was leaving the court, he encountered Lehigh's Brett Reed, someone he has always gotten along with in the 11 years Reed has been the Mountain Hawks' coach.

"I was really struggling at that moment," he said. "I'm not even sure why, but I said to Brett, 'Is your mom still with us?' He looked at me like I was crazy but said yes, she was. I said, 'Do me a favor. Give her a call tonight and tell her you love her.' I'm sure he thought I'd lost my mind but he said, 'OK, Jeff.'"

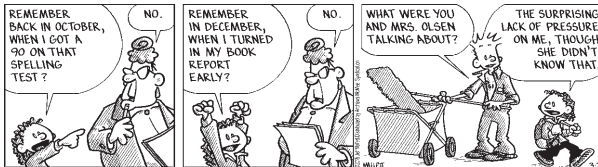
A few days later, as Janosik was working on the eulogy he would deliver on his mother's behalf, an envelope arrived from the Lehigh basketball office. It was a condolence card, signed by Reed, his coaches and all his players.

"What a wonderful gesture," Janosik said. "A lot of people have reached out to me, but that card meant a lot to me."

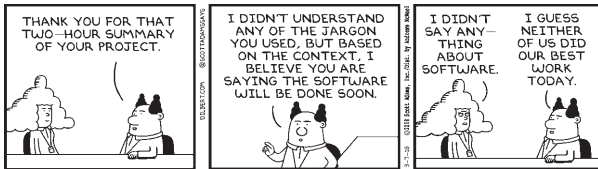
Because, despite what many people think, referees are human, too.

John Feinstein is a sports columnist for The Washington Post and also provides commentary for the Golf Channel and National Public Radio.

Frazz



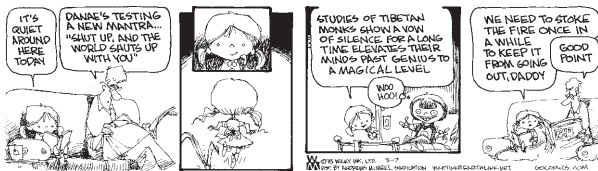
Dilbert



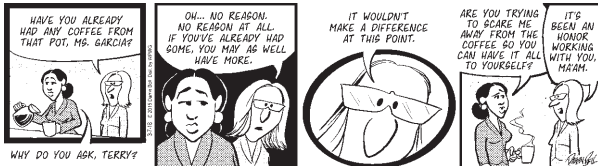
Pearls Before Swine



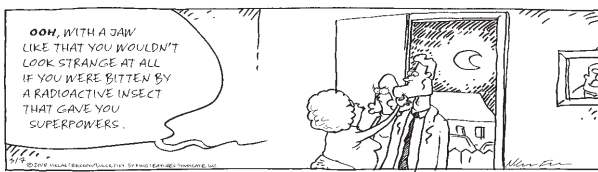
Non Sequitur



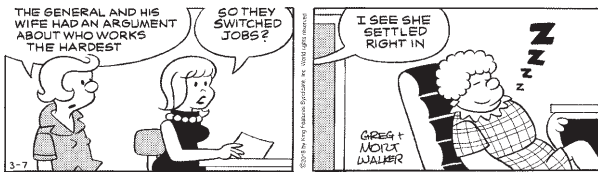
Candorville



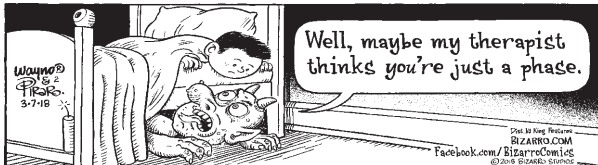
Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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56					57					58		
59					60					61		

ACROSS

- 1 Zing
- 4 Uppity one
- 8 U2 lead singer
- 12 High card
- 13 Ringlet
- 14 "Frozen" snowman
- 15 Samovar
- 16 Fancy burger ingredient
- 18 Moon-related
- 20 Tease
- 21 Sir's counterpart
- 24 Roly-poly
- 28 Youngster on base
- 32 Canal of song
- 33 Corp. boss
- 34 Begets
- 36 Econ. statistic
- 37 Harangue
- 39 George Eliot novel

DOWN

- 6 Tend texts
- 7 Cover
- 25 Desire
- 26 Behave
- 27 Le Pew of cartoons
- 1 One of the
- 2 Fab Four
- 3 Beige
- 3 Ivy League team
- 4 Egyptian amulets
- 5 Convent manager
- 6 Assoc.
- 7 Fuzzy image
- 8 Infidel's flub
- 9 Flamenco cheer
- 10 Scot's refusal
- 11 Not on
- 17 Use a straw
- 19 "Little Women" woman
- 22 Operatic solo
- 23—Gras
- 28 Farm unit
- 29 500 sheets
- 30 "— Lisa"
- 31 Afternoon affairs
- 35 Greet with a grin
- 38 Lumberjack's call
- 40 A/C stat
- 42 Actress Lucy
- 45 Competent
- 47 Hammer's target
- 48 Spiced tea
- 49 Poker holding
- 50 Succor
- 51 Equi-
- 52 Old Oldsmobile
- 53 Nap site
- 54 Half of CIV

Answer to Previous Puzzle

T	A	P	E	S	E	R	F	Q	U	O
A	L	E	C	A	M	O	I	U	S	A
D	A	C	H	S	H	U	N	D	E	E
				O	I	L	S	D	E	E
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R	U	E	S		D	O	B	E	R	M
I	S	M		S	A	V	O	R		A
C	H	O	W		C	H	O	W		B
				C	A	R	L		H	A
B	U	R	S	A		T	E	E	D	
A	T	A		G	R	E	Y		H	O
T	A	C		G	O	R	E		F	R
S	H	Y		Y	E	N	S		F	I

3-7

CRYPTOQUIP

B'O OWNX YLL YBK FV YLVUA,

GL B YXBEH OUAQF B'II

VKBEH U NWD LT NLTTFF

UEV XLDF TLK YXF QLLGY.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: EACH YEAR, A BUNCH OF THE COMMUNITY'S GOOD FISHERS AND TAILORS COMPETE IN A SPOOLING BEE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals M


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Be aware of the common red flags.

Some of the latest Scam fads are:

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Automotive 140

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Visit online for more content and video—or to share your memories: [stripes.com/vietnam50](https://www.stripes.com/vietnam50)

Oakland vs. Seattle at Peoria, Ariz.

1-1, Richardson 1-3, Wade 1-4, Dragic 1-4, Jones Jr. 0-1, Haslem 0-1, Johnson 0-2, McGruder 0-3). Rebounds—Phoenix 40 (Jackson 7), Miami 51 (Whiteside 14).

NHL/NFL

NHL roundup

Schultz, Pens top Flames

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Mike Sullivan would love to point to a coaching tactic or some semblance of strategy that explains why the Pittsburgh Penguins are so good in overtime.

Only Sullivan can't. He's been coaching long enough to know that when there are six just men on the ice and his team happens to have one of the most gifted of offensive groups in the NHL, it's best to just get out of the way.

"For the most part, it's really just about great players making great plays and when our guys have the puck, they're dynamic," Sullivan said.

The latest proof came midway through the extra period on Monday, when Phil Kessel drew Calgary's Jon Gillies away from the net and slipped a cross-ice pass to Justin Schultz, who buried it to give the Penguins a 4-3 victory. Schultz's fourth goal of the season helped the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions improve to 10-1 at home in overtime this season.

"We've got the players that are so good out there with that much ice, so we enjoy it," Schultz said. "We don't like to go to [overtime] that much, but it's nice to know that we can get wins."

Kessel and Malkin scored his 37th goal for the Penguins and added an assist. Kris Letang and Chad Ruhwedel also scored for Pittsburgh. Jarry finished with 35 saves as the Penguins pulled within one point of Washington for first in the crowded Metropolitan Division. Tristram Jarry finished with 35 saves, including a breakaway stop on Calgary star Johnny Gaudreau early in overtime.

"They got some physical guys, they have a couple bigger guys," Jarry said. "We knew it would be a tough game. I was trying to hold my ground as much as I could."

Mark Giordano, Mikael Backlund and Troy Brouwer scored for the Flames, who outplayed the Penguins for long stretches before dropping their fourth straight. Gillies stopped 28 shots but had no chance on the game winner.

Sabres 5, Maple Leafs 3 — Ryan O'Reilly drew Zengus Girgensons scored 2:05 apart in the second period, and host Buffalo landed Toronto its fourth straight loss.

Oilers 4, Coyotes 3 (OT): Oscar Klefbom's first goal in 34 games came in overtime, giving host Edmonton the victory over Arizona.

Senators 3, Stars 2 (OT): Erik Karlsson scored on a breakaway with 2:19 left in overtime and visiting Ottawa beat Dallas.

Canucks 4, Islanders 3 (OT): Brendan Leipsic scored his second goal of the game 2:47 into overtime to lift host Vancouver over New York.



GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

The Penguins' Justin Schultz, bottom scores the winning goal in overtime past Calgary Flames goaltender Jon Gillies, top, during Monday's game in Pittsburgh. The Penguins won 4-3.

NHL scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF GA
Tampa Bay	66	45	17	4	94	240 182
Boston	63	40	15	8	88	209 158
Toronto	68	39	22	7	85	223 195
Florida	63	32	25	6	70	189 198
Detroit	65	32	19	10	62	173 193
Montreal	65	25	29	11	61	167 200
Ottawa	65	23	32	10	56	177 227
Buffalo	66	21	34	11	53	159 214
Metropolitan Division						
Washington	65	37	21	7	81	203 193
Pittsburgh	67	38	25	4	89	219 203
Philadelphia	66	34	21	11	79	197 193
New Jersey	66	33	25	8	74	193 198
Columbus	66	33	28	5	67	176 186
Carolina	66	29	26	11	69	176 198
N.Y. Islanders	67	29	29	9	67	216 241
N.Y. Rangers	66	30	30	6	66	189 198

Western Conference

Central Division						
	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF/GA
Nashville	65	42	14	9	93	214/168
Winnipeg	66	37	22	7	81	204/168
Minnesota	66	32	27	7	70	183/174
Dallas	66	37	23	6	80	195/174
Colorado	65	35	24	6	76	205/174
St. Louis	66	32	28	6	67	188/174
Chicago	66	28	30	8	64	188/195
Pacific Division						
Vegas	66	35	22	9	89	225/168
San Jose	66	35	22	9	79	196/168
Anaheim	66	33	21	12	78	186/183
Los Angeles	66	36	25	5	77	192/168
San Jose	67	31	28	11	68	183/174
Edmonton	66	28	34	4	60	187/219
Vancouver	66	25	32	9	59	180/217
Seattle	66	25	32	9	59	180/217

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards earn playoff berths.

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Monday's games
Pittsburgh 4, Calgary 3, OT
Buffalo 5, Toronto 3
Ottawa 3, Dallas 2, OT
Edmonton 4, Arizona 3, OT
Vancouver 4, N.Y. Islanders 3, OT

Tuesday's games
Calgary at Anaheim
Washington at New Jersey
Winnipeg at N.Y. Rangers
Vegas at Columbus
Montreal at New Jersey
Detroit at Boston
Florida at Tampa Bay
Colorado at Minnesota
Dallas at Nashville

Wednesday's games
Calgary at Buffalo
Philadelphia at Philadelphia
Arizona at Arizona
Florida at Florida

Thursday's games
Colorado at Columbus
Anaheim at New Jersey
Philadelphia at Boston
Buffalo at Ottawa
Montreal at Florida
Vegas at Detroit

Friday's games
Rangers at Tampa Bay
Anaheim at Nashville
Carolina at Pittsburgh
N.Y. Islanders at Edmonton
Washington at Los Angeles
St. Louis at San Jose

Monday
Penguins 4, Flames 3 (OT)
Calgary 3, Pittsburgh 4
3:05 P.T. — Pittsburgh, Ruhwedel 2 (Kessel), 2:10. 2 Pittsburgh, Malkin 3:05. 3, Calgary, Giordano 11 (Brouwer, Schur), 4:4. Calgary, Backlund 11 (Hamon, Frolik), 10:18.

Tuesday
Pittsburgh, Schultz 6 (Hagelin, Malkin), 17:01. 6, Calgary, Brouwer 5 (Brode, Gaudreau), 19:57.
Ottawa, Schultz 4 (Kessel, Malkin), 2:36.

Sabres 5, Maple Leafs 3
Shots on goal—Calgary 16-8; 12-3-8. Pittsburgh 11-11; 9-1-32.
Power-play opportunities—Calgary 0 of 2; Pittsburgh 1 of 2.
Goals—Calgary, Gillies 2-21. 12 (38-35).

A-18,630 (18,387). T-2:34.

NFL briefs

Lawrence gets franchise tag

Associated Press

The Dallas Cowboys placed the franchise tag on DeMarcus Lawrence on Monday, and the Pro Bowl defensive end quickly signed the one-year contract that guarantees him \$17.1 million in 2018.

The Cowboys had until Tuesday to put the tag on Lawrence, who can still sign a long-term deal with the club that traded up to get him early in the second round in 2014. Lawrence's agent, David Cantor,

wrote on Twitter that his client signed the deal.

Lawrence tied All-Pro Calais Campbell of Jacksonville for second in the NFL with 14½ sacks last season. The 25-year-old's breakout year came after he struggled with injuries most of his previous seasons. He had back surgery each of the previous two offseasons.

On the one-year contract, Lawrence's salary would be the average of the NFL's five highest-paid defensive ends.

Lawrence is an important piece with the Cowboys trying to get back to the playoffs after missing at 9-7 a year after they had an NFC-best 13 wins.

Raiders release Smith after brush with law

ALAMEDA, Calif. — The Oakland Raiders released pass rusher Aldon Smith on Monday after his latest run-in with the law.

The Raiders retained Smith's contractual rights even as he spent the past two seasons on the NFL's suspended list. But the team decided finally to cut ties one day after San Francisco police said authorities were searching for Smith in connection with a domestic violence allegation.

San Francisco police said Monday an arrest warrant has been obtained for Smith stemming from allegations that Smith assaulted a woman on Saturday night. Smith left before police arrived to respond to the 911 call, and authorities are working with Smith's attorney to arrange a time for him to surrender.

Smith is facing misdemeanor charges of willful infliction of corporal injury, assault with force likely to produce great bodily injury, false imprisonment and vandalism, according to Sgt. Michael Andraychak.

Falcons agree to 3-year extension with K Bryant

FLOWERY BRANCH, Ga. — The Atlanta Falcons have agreed to terms on a three-year contract extension with kicker Matt Bryant.

The Falcons announced the agreement before Bryant could become a free agent on March 14.

In nine seasons with the Falcons, Bryant has made 88.1 percent of his field-goal attempts — 230-for-261 — and has missed only one of 340 extra points.

Bryant, who will turn 43 on May 29, made 34 of 37 field goals in 2016 and 34 of 39 in 2017. He made eight of nine field goals from at least 50 yards last season.

Forte plans to retire as member of Bears

CHICAGO — Matt Forte plans to retire as a member of the Chicago Bears.

The two-time Pro Bowl running back told NBC Sports Chicago on Monday that he will sign a one-day contract so he can officially go out as a Bear. Forte announced last week he is calling it a career after 10 seasons.

A second-round draft pick out of Tulane in 2008, Forte spent his first eight seasons with Chicago and his last two with the New York Jets.

During 9,796 yards rushing rank 33rd on the NFL's career list.

CB Cromartie retiring after 11 seasons

Veteran cornerback Antonio Cromartie announced his retirement from the NFL on Monday.

The 11-year pro with four franchises posted a message on Instagram saying "after 27 years of playing football, today I say farewell."

An All-Pro with San Diego in 2007, when he led the league with 10 interceptions, Cromartie was one of the NFL's best cornerbacks for much of his career, making four Pro Bowls. He also scored the longest touchdown in league history, returning a missed field goal by Minnesota for a 109-yard score in 2007.

Cromartie, 33, spent his first four seasons with the Chargers, making the playoffs each year. He then joined the Jets and made the AFC championship game with them in 2010, his first of four straight seasons as a starter in Rex Ryan's defense.

He spent 2014 with Arizona, returned to the Jets in 2015, and finished his career in 2016 with Indianapolis.

Sabres 5, Maple Leafs 3

Toronto	1	1	1-3
Buffalo	2	2	1-5
First Period—1, Buffalo, Reinhart 16 (Oso, Ristolainen), 1:53 (pp), 2, Buffalo, Pominville 11 (Larsson, Ristolainen), 3:43, 3, Toronto, Komarov 6 (Nylander, Marleau), 19:52 (pp).			
Second Period—4, Toronto, Komarov 7 (Martin, Zaitsev), 10:48, 5, Buffalo, Girgensons 7 (Reinhart, O'Reilly), 13:30, 6, Buffalo, O'Reilly 19, 15:35.			
Third Period—7, Buffalo, Larsson 4 (Nolan, Pominville), 9:55, 8, Toronto, Marnier 18 (Rielly, Carrick), 17:57 (pp).			
Shots on Goal—Toronto 14-11-16=41. Buffalo 11-14-16=41.			
Power-play opportunities—Toronto 2 of 2; Power 1 of 2.			
Shots on Goal—Andersen 32-18-5 (24 shots-19 saves), Buffalo, Johnson 7-10-3 (41-38).			

SPORTS BRIEFS/COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Briefly

Love discloses panic attack

Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Suffering for years in silence, Kevin Love has opened up about his struggles with mental health.

The Cavaliers forward writes in an essay for the *Players' Tribune* that he had a panic attack during a game this season and he has spent most of his life afraid to accept there was something wrong with him.

"For 29 years, I thought about mental health as someone else's problem," he said.

Love says he was stricken with anxiety Nov. 5 during a home game against the Atlanta Hawks. Love adds that he had been under family stress and hadn't been sleeping well. After briefly being winded while playing 15 minutes in the first half, he felt his heart racing and couldn't catch his breath during a timeout in the third quarter.

"It's hard to describe, but everything was spinning, like my brain was trying to climb out of my head," said Love, a five-time All-Star now sidelined after breaking his left hand last month.

The air felt thick and heavy. My mouth was like chalk. I remember our assistant coach yelling something about a defensive set. I nodded, but I didn't hear much of what he said. By that point, I was freaking out."

Love was taken to the Cleveland Clinic, but tests didn't reveal anything abnormal. He returned to playing at a high level, but was puzzled by what happened and burdened about people finding out.

Although he did not mention it in his essay, titled "Everyone Is Going Through Something," Love left Jan. 20 game against Oklahoma City under similar circumstances. He also missed the team's practice the following day. Those absences prompted the now infamous heated team meeting in which former teammate Isaiah Thomas and others questioned why Love had been excused.

The exchange led to tense days around the Cavs, who rebuilt their roster by trading Thomas and four other players before the deadline.

Love's father, Stan, also played in the NBA. Kevin Love says he always struggled with the stigma attached to an athlete who shows weakness.

"Growing up, you figure out really quickly how a boy is supposed to act," he said. "You learn what it takes to be a man. It's like a playbook: 'Be strong. Don't talk about your feelings. Get through it on your own.' So for 29 years of my life, I followed that playbook."

The Cavs encouraged Love to see a therapist and he gets counseling a few times a month when the team is at home.

Love said he drew courage to go public with his issues after Toronto All-Star DeMar DeRozan's recently acknowledged he has had bouts of depression.



Jim Mone/AP

The Cleveland Cavaliers' Kevin Love disclosed in an essay for the *Players' Tribune* on Tuesday that he suffered a panic attack on Nov. 5 in a home game against the Atlanta Hawks. He was briefly hospitalized at the Cleveland Clinic and the episode left him shaken.

Lawrence files lawsuit against ESPN

HARTFORD, Conn. — A former on-air personality at ESPN has filed a lawsuit alleging she was subjected to sexual harassment at the cable television sports giant and then ostracized for complaining about it.

The lawsuit filed Sunday in federal court in Connecticut by Adrienne Lawrence describes an atmosphere in which male employees openly watch pornography on their computers and keep "scorecards" naming female colleagues they are targeting for sex.

The network said in a statement that it investigated the allegations raised by Lawrence and they are without merit.

Lawrence, who served a fellowship at ESPN, said in the lawsuit that she was subjected to unwelcome advances from anchor John Buccigross. She says he sent her unsolicited shirtless photos and used inappropriate nicknames like "doll" for her.

The lawsuit alleges that Lawrence was denied opportunities for professional development and passed over for a permanent job in retaliation for complaining to supervisors.

Sharma gets invitation to play Masters

PALM HARBOR, Fla. — Shubhanika Sharma can add another achievement to his rapid rise. He's going to the Masters.

Two days after Sharma held the 54-hole lead at his first World Golf Championship, the 21-year-old from India accepted a special invitation to the Masters next month. Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley says the Masters has a history of inviting international players not otherwise qualified, and Sharma's results have made him worthy of the invitation.

Sharma was outside the top 400 in the world three months ago. Now he is the only two-time winner on the European Tour

this season and leads the Race to Dubai. He lost a two-shot lead in the final round of the Mexico Championship and tied for ninth. Sharma rose to a No. 66 ranking.

Coe: Russians could be banned from track

BIRMINGHAM, England — IAAF president Sebastian Coe says Russians could be stopped from competing as neutral athletes if the country fails to show "dramatic progress" in the fight against doping.

Russia has been suspended since 2015, when the World Anti-Doping Agency found evidence of widespread doping. The only Russians allowed to compete at IAAF events since then have been designated as neutral athletes.

Coe says "unless dramatic progress is made we, and we genuinely hope it is being made, then we will have to review at our council meeting in July the status of the neutral competitors and the potential for the congress to decide upon the ultimate sanction, I guess, which is expulsion."

Boxer Alvarez blames meat for failed test

LOS ANGELES — Middleweight boxer Canelo Alvarez has tested positive for a banned drug, and his promoters blame contaminated meat.

A voluntary test showed Alvarez had traces of clenbuterol. A statement from Golden Boy Promotions said the amount was consistent with meat contamination that has impacted athletes in Mexico and China.

Daniel Eichner, director of the World Anti-Doping Agency-accredited laboratory that conducted the test, wrote Monday: "These values are all within the range of what is expected from meat contamination."

Alvarez is scheduled for a rematch with middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin on May 5 in Las Vegas.



TRAVIS HEYING, THE WICHITA EAGLE/AP

Wichita State center Shaquille Morris takes a shot against Cincinnati forward Kyle Washington on Sunday.

Sowing: Big East's Xavier, Villanova could get top seeds

FROM BACK PAGE

The fifth-ranked Blue Devils open play in Thursday's quarterfinals while sitting at No. 3 in KenPom and No. 4 in the RPI. A run to a second straight ACC Tournament title could help them snag a No. 1 seed.

As for the No. 12 Tar Heels, they finished tied for third in the standings but ended up as the No. 6 seed due to tiebreakers. Yet they enter Wednesday's second-round game against the Wake Forest-Syracuse winner with 10 Quadrant 1 wins, second only to Kansas (11) — and that could have them in contention for a 2-seed despite their low ACC Tournament seeding.

The ACC has a national-best five teams in the AP Top 25.

Big East

Villanova hopped over Xavier to reach No. 2 in Monday's poll, though the third-ranked Musketeers are the No. 1 seed in the Big East Tournament. And Villanova swept the regular-season series.

Both teams open play in Thursday's quarterfinals in New York's Madison Square Garden, with Xavier facing the St. John's-Georgetown winner and Villanova facing the DePaul-Marquette winner. And one — maybe both? — could end up earning No. 1 NCAA seeds.

Big 12

Ninth-ranked Kansas enters the Big 12 Tournament in Kansas City, Mo., as the top seed and in the running for a No. 1 NCAA seed. The Jayhawks face the Oklahoma-Oklahoma State winner in Thursday's quarterfinals.

No. 14 Texas Tech, the second seed, opens play against the Iowa State-Texas winner, while No. 18 West Virginia faces bubble team Baylor to wrap up the quarterfinals.

NCAA automatic bids

Iona, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference
Lipscomb, Atlantic Sun Conference
Loyola of Chicago, Missouri Valley Conference
Michigan, Big Ten Conference
Murray State, Ohio Valley Conference
Radford, Big South Conference
UNC-Greensboro, Southern Conference

Pac-12

No. 15 Arizona enters the Pac-12 Tournament in Las Vegas as the top seed. The Wildcats will face the Arizona State-Colorado winner in Thursday's quarterfinals as the only AP Top 25 team in the field.

SEC

The Southeastern Conference Tournament begins Wednesday in St. Louis and ends Sunday a few hours before the field of 68 is announced. No. 13 Tennessee and No. 16 Auburn shared the regular-season title, though the Tigers claimed the No. 1 seed.

Both teams open play in Friday's quarterfinals, with Auburn facing the Alabama-Texas A&M winner and Tennessee facing the LSU-Mississippi State winner.

AAC

No. 8 Cincinnati and No. 11 Wichita State met over the weekend to determine the American Athletic Conference regular-season title. Could they do it again in the AAC Tournament?

Both look like candidates to be a No. 3 seed at least depending on how things go in Orlando. The top-seeded Bearcats open in Friday's quarterfinals against the SMU-Connecticut winner, while the second-seeded Shockers face the Tulane-Temple winner.

Also lurking in Wichita State's half of the bracket is No. 21 Houston, which is closing on its first NCAA bid since 2010.

Conference tournament scoreboard

The Spartans are dancing for the first time in 17 years and likely will be a No. 16 seed.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Cardiac Hurricanes

have won 4 straight

Miami hottest team going into ACC tourney

By STEVEN WINE
Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — The exciting but erratic Miami Hurricanes finally found something they do consistently well: win close games.

Coach Jim Larranaga's young, No. 24-ranked Hurricanes have strung together four consecutive victories by a total of eight points, all decided on the final possession, to earn the No. 3 seeding in this week's Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament in New York.

Call them the Cardiac Canes.

"We joke around in the locker room: We keep it interesting for the fans just to keep them anxious and nervous," guard Dejan Vasiljevic said. "Poise down the stretch is an emphasis — being able to make big shots and big plays and be calm. Our team has showed a lot of heart."

The margins of victory in the past two weeks have been three points, one, three and one. With four wins in a row by less than four points, the Hurricanes (22-8, 11-7 ACC) tied a 61-year-old league record, and it's their first for the school.

Last week Miami won 91-88 at then-No. 9 North Carolina on Ja'Quan Newton's desperation buzzer-beater from near mid-court, and beat Virginia Tech 69-68 when Chris Lykes sank the front end of a 1-and-1 with three seconds to go.

The last ACC team to win four in a row by less than four points was Duke in 1984. Larranaga, in his 46th year of coaching,

said he has never experienced such a run.

"Confidence is a huge part of success — believing in yourself," he said. "Our guys have developed a lot of confidence in themselves and their teammates."

The succession of heart-stoppers comes at the end of a roller-coaster regular season. The Hurricanes climbed to sixth in the rankings before Christmas but fell out of the Top 25 after losing four times in a seven-game stretch.

Perimeter shooting, free throws, rebounding, turnovers and offensive execution against the zone have all been issues. Miami lost twice at home in February, and was beaten by three teams that finished in the ACC's second division.

The Hurricanes had to adjust to the loss of star guard Bruce Brown Jr., sidelined by a foot injury since late January. But they've now won seven of 10 without Brown, who could receive medical clearance next week to return.

"We've missed him," Larranaga said. "But it gave other players an opportunity to step up."

That includes freshman guard Lonnie Walker IV, projected as a possible NBA lottery pick in June. He has averaged 15.1 points over the past 15 games, including several memorable baskets at crunch time.

Walker sank a layup in the closing seconds of regulation in an overtime win over Louisville, a three-pointer with two seconds left to beat Boston College, and a tying field goal in the final minute last



ANDREW ULOZA, MIAMI HERALD/AP

Miami's Ja'Quan Newton, center, squeezes his way through the Virginia Tech defense during Saturday's game in Coral Gables, Fla. Miami won 69-68.

week against Virginia Tech.

The most recent victory made Miami 10-1 in games decided by six points or less, with the lone loss a two-pointer at Boston College.

"We've been through it so much," Walk-

er said. "The way we approach it and how calm and collected we have been a big deal. We know what we can do and need to do. The past four games we've been figuring that out and approaching it pretty well."

BYU upsets No. 20 Saint Mary's in WCC semifinals

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Yoeli Childs and BYU saved their best game of the season for the right time.

Childs scored a career-high 33 points and the Cougars shot 61 percent from the field to beat No. 22 Saint Mary's 85-72 in Monday's West Coast Conference Tournament semifinals.

"It was a real good win for us," BYU coach Dave Rose said. "Tonight, they were on it. They shared the ball, made big shots, executed well. It was a well-played game on both sides."

The Cougars (24-9) now face No. 7 and top-seeded Gonzaga (29-4) in the championship game Tuesday night as they go for their first WCC Tournament title.

"Our reward is Gonzaga," Rose said. "We played them a week before and we look forward to it. We'll start thinking about them when we get back to the hotel."

Childs was 13-for-18 from the field, including hitting all three three-point attempts. He also had six rebounds.

"The ball was popping around for us (tonight)," Childs said. "We just gave each other energy. We had the mentality to win."

Elijah Bryant added 25 points for the Cougars, going 8-for-13 from the field and making all eight free-throw attempts.

Jordan Ford led Saint Mary's (28-5) with 27 points and six rebounds.

"The biggest problem was at the defen-



ISAAC BRENNEN/AP

Saint Mary's Evan Fitzner, middle, tries to stop a shot by BYU's Elijah Bryant, left, during the second half of a West Coast Conference tournament semifinal Monday in Las Vegas. BYU knocked off No. 22 Saint Mary's 85-72.

sive end," said Saint Mary's coach Randy Bennett, whose team shot 50 percent from the field. "We usually hold them to 40-41 percent (from the field). We gave up 61. We

gave them 10 points on hustle plays. When you play good teams at this stage of the season, you can't give teams easy baskets."

The Gaels' Jock Landale, who fouled

out with 21 seconds left, had 23 points but only four rebounds. Landale committed his third foul with 1:49 left before halftime and fouled with 8:39 left in the game.

"Every loss, I've been in foul trouble," Landale said. "I've got to stop making silly plays."

No. 7 Gonzaga 88, San Francisco 60: At Las Vegas, Killian Tillie scored 26 points on 10-for-11 shooting, including connecting on all five three-pointers, to lead the Bulldogs past the Dons in a West Coast Conference Tournament semifinal game.

Tillie has made all 10 three-point attempts at the tournament and is 19-for-23 from the field.

Top-seeded Gonzaga was going for its sixth consecutive WCC Tournament title on Tuesday night against BYU, an 85-72 upset winner over Saint Mary's.

Also for top-seeded Gonzaga (29-4), Rui Hachimura had 17 points and Zach Norvell Jr. added 14. Johnathan Williams had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Bulldogs, who won their 13th straight, and 16th at the WCC Tournament.

Nate Renfro led the fourth-seeded Dons (18-15) with 15 points. Frankie Ferrari and Souley Boum each added nine points for San Francisco, which lost its 14th straight to Gonzaga.

The Bulldogs played a nearly flawless first half, shooting 18-for-28 (64 percent), including 8-for-14 (57 percent) from three-point range.

MLB



CARLOS OSORIO/AP

Stung by a disappointing season, Kyle Schwarber stepped up his workouts over the winter, embraced a new diet and lost about 20 pounds. The catcher-turned-outfielder looks faster and more agile this spring, a positive sign as he tries to return to form after struggling last year.

Attempting to bounce back

Cubs' Schwarber noticeably different after offseason regimen

By JAY COHEN
Associated Press

MESA, Ariz. — Chicago Cubs ace Jon Lester is trying a new approach when it comes to his biggest weakness.

One bounce at a time. Lester is working with new third base coach Brian Butterfield on bouncing his throw to the bases when he has to make a play on defense. He got a chance to use the technique during Sunday's 2-0 loss to Arizona in spring training, and the ball skipped past minor league first baseman Eren Navarro for an error.

Lester has struggled with throwing to bases for years, but the three-time World Series winner remains one of the game's most effective pitchers. The 34-year-old left-hander is slated to start on opening day on March 29 at Miami.

"It's just a different thing for him," Butterfield said Monday. "Throwing a ball to a base for him in a quiet setting is far different than when

Lester working on bounce throw

he's got to cock his arm in a game setting. You know, that's understandable, just because pitchers for the most part, it's probably a little bit more difficult for them to throw to the bases because they've made a living out of long arm action."

Lester and Butterfield have been working on the bounce throw on the backfields of Chicago's spring training complex. They also tinkered with the concept while the two were in Boston.

Lester also was working with Navarro instead of regular first baseman Anthony Rizzo.

If the concept is successful, it would give manager Joe Maddon more options when it comes to aligning his defense in certain situations.

It also would make life easier on Rizzo, third baseman Kris Bryant and catcher Willson Contreras while Lester is on the mound.

— Associated Press

World Series and helped the Cubs win the championship for the first time since 1908.

He managed to stay healthy last year. But the season was pretty much a disaster.

The No. 4 overall pick in the 2014 draft hit just .211 with 30 homers, 59 RBIs and 150 strikeouts in 129 games. He struggled during an extended stay at the leadoff spot and even spent some time in the minors while he tried to find his swing.

"Just trying to do too much," Schwarber said, "because when you're in that slump, you're just wanting to get out of it so bad because you want to win, you want to help the team win and sometimes you just put too much pressure on yourself."

Schwarber got right back to work shortly after the Cubs were eliminated by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the NL Championship Series.

By the time this season rolled around, he was ready.

He had two hits and swiped two bases in Chicago's second game after he had one steal all of last season. He made his sixth spring appearance in the Cubs' 7-4 victory over the Reds and went 1-for-2 with a single back up the middle in the third.

Harvey trying to get back on track

By BILL WHITEHEAD
Associated Press

PORT ST. LUCIE, Fla. — Matt Harvey thinks he is on the right track as he tries to regain the form that made him an All-Star in 2013.

The oft-injured New York Mets pitcher allowed two hits in three scoreless innings against Detroit on Monday in his second spring training appearance.

"I was pleased with putting up zeroes but also to be able to throw my pitches and keep guys guessing," the 28-year-old right-hander said. "I didn't go late into the game because we're only going three innings, but I finished the outing strong and came out with zeroes."

An All-Star who started the 2013 game at the Mets' Citi Field, Harvey has struggled since tearing the ulnar collateral ligament in his pitching elbow that August. He was 13-8 with a 2.71 ERA in 29 starts when he returned in 2015 following Tommy John surgery, then slumped to 4-10 with a 4.86 ERA, when he didn't start after July 4 because of Thoracic Outlet Syndrome, which required another operation.

He wound up 5-7 with a 6.70 ERA last year, when he was sidelined from mid-June until September because of a stress fracture in his scapula, which connects the arm with the collarbone.

Harvey, who is eligible for free agency after this season, threw in the mid-90 mph range against the Tigers. Not quite the level he reached in his youth but enough to be effective.

"I think the third inning I felt better than the first two innings," he said. "Usually it's the other way around. That's a good sign. I was able to get in trouble and get out of it."

Harvey had one strikeout and one walk in a 6-pitch outing.

"He pitched with not his best stuff today," new Mets manager Mickey Callaway said. "Throughout the season you're going to have a handful of those. If you can get through those, that's huge. He did a great job of throwing strike one and maybe fell behind after that, but he knew he had good stuff, made a pitch and got out of it. He can be very good for us."

Harvey faced a batting order that included Miguel Cabrera and Victor Martinez, who are able to go three against that lineup was a good test," Harvey said.



Harvey

SPORTS



Lillard lights up Lakers

Point guard scores 19 in fourth quarter to rally Portland » **Page 26**

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Sowing the seeds

A lot at stake in this week's conference tournaments

BY AARON BEARD
Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — Selection Sunday is now days away, making this week the last chance for teams to earn a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament, stay close to home — or simply earn a bid.

The Big Ten has already wrapped up its early tournament, with seventh-ranked Michigan playing its way into similar position as last year when the Wolverines got hot late, won the league tournament and went on to the NCAA Sweet 16. And the West Coast Conference concluded with Tuesday's final between No. 6 Gonzaga and BYU in Las Vegas.

Now college basketball's other top conferences are heading into their tournaments. The Atlantic Coast Conference opened Tuesday. The Big East, Big 12, Pac-12, Southeastern Conference open

play Wednesday, while the American Athletic Conference Tournament starts Thursday.

Here are storylines to watch:

ACC

Top-ranked Virginia, which became the unanimous No. 1 in the AP Top 25 on Monday, begins in Thursday's quarterfinals and looks solid for a No. 1 NCAA seed regardless of what happens in Brooklyn. The Cavaliers are No. 1 in the RPI and in KenPom, won the ACC regular-season race by four games and own a 9-1 record against Quadrant 1 opponents through Sunday's games — Quadrant 1 contests are home games vs. teams ranked 1-30 in RPI, neutral games vs. 1-50 and away games vs. 1-75.

The other question is what happens with rivals Duke and North Carolina.

SEE SOWING ON PAGE 28



BEN MCKEOWN/AP

Duke's Marvin Bagley III, right, celebrates after a dunk Saturday against North Carolina. Both teams' seeding for the NCAA Tournament will likely be determined by how they fare in this week's Atlantic Coast Conference tournament.



Michigan center Jon Teske reacts during the Big Ten tournament championship game.

JULIE JACOBSON/AP

Iona beats Fairfield to win third straight MAAC title » **College basketball, Page 29**

Cavaliers' Love opens up about mental health issues » **Sports briefs, Page 28**

